



Herron Station

Station Area Plan

April 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Pittsburgh Regional Transit

Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) provides public transportation throughout the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County in Western Pennsylvania.

PRT’s 2,600 employees operate, maintain, and support bus, light rail, incline, and paratransit services for approximately 200,000 daily riders.

Governed by an 11-member board appointed by the Allegheny County executive, leaders from both parties in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Senate, and the governor of Pennsylvania, the board and its committees hold regularly scheduled public meetings.

PRT’s budget is funded by fare and advertising revenue, along with money from county, state, and federal sources. PRT’s finances and operations are audited on a regular basis, both internally and by external agencies.

PRT began serving the community as the Port Authority of Allegheny County in March 1964. In early 2015, PRT began investing in a transit-oriented development (TOD) program. This document is the result of investment to date, overseen by Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) staff and an interdisciplinary working group. The Port Authority of Allegheny County re-branded as Pittsburgh Regional Transit in 2022.

PRT Leadership and Staff

The Herron Station Area Plan was stewarded internally by PRT’s TOC advisory committee, an interdepartmental body established to support the Station Improvement Program and PRT’s TOD activities. This committee is hosted and managed by Moira Egler, AICP, PRT’s Manager of Transit-Oriented Communities.



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INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS THE HERRON STATION AREA PLAN?

PRT’s Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. East Busway is a unique and high performing public transportation asset for the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, and the broader Pittsburgh metropolitan region. With fast, reliable, high-capacity transit service connecting residents to jobs, education, recreation, errands, and healthcare opportunities, improving the passenger experience and access to East Busway stations is one of the most impactful ways to improve mobility in the community.

The Herron Station Area Plan seeks to improve mobility by modernizing Herron Station to be more comfortable and welcoming, to improve visibility and access to the station by re-establishing direct access to Polish Hill, and upgrade streetscape and amenities for pedestrians walking to Herron Station from Lawrenceville and the Strip District. Although Herron Station is relied upon by daily users, there are many potential riders in the area who are not familiar with the station, and its modernization and redesign will improve connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods and the broader region

The study area for the Herron Station Area Plan encompasses significant portions of Polish Hill, Lower Lawrenceville, and the Strip District, stretching along Herron Avenue from Bigelow Boulevard to Doughboy Square. Community organizations, local agencies, and residents in and around these areas play a pivotal role in the plan to develop a comprehensive design.



Fig.1 View of the entrance to Herron Station from Herron Avenue



Fig.2 Communities of the MLK Jr. East Busway

1.2 WHAT IS STATION AREA PLANNING?

Station area planning examines the challenges and opportunities for PRT stations within the context of three scales. For these communities and PRT riders, this process also serves as an opportunity to engage in conversation with PRT about issues related to station configuration, station access, area land use, and potential transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities.

A station area plan includes recommendations about changes to the physical environment of the station itself and adjacent areas that build a stronger connection between the station and the neighborhoods around it. This connection makes it easier for residents and visitors to use the transit service at the station and across the broader metro area.

These recommendations might include:

- Proposed improvements to the station, such as new platforms, shelters, or customer information
- Proposed access upgrades to the station, such as improved paths or stairs
- Opportunities to incorporate public art into any of the infrastructure described above
- Proposed changes to zoning and other development regulations near the station
- Policy changes that support community goals expressed by the public living near the station



Fig.3 Stakeholders Visit Herron Station During the Planning Process

1.3 HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This document provides a shared understanding of the existing conditions and opportunities for Herron Station for the surrounding community and TOD stakeholders, including riders, residents, transit agencies, local governments, regional planners, community groups, developers, and others. It should be used to:

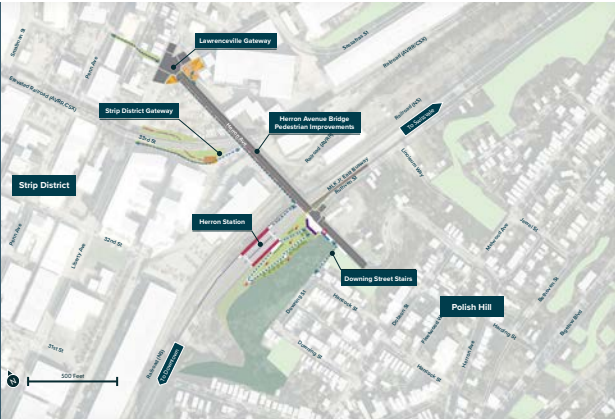
EVALUATE CONDITIONS



Create a Shared Understanding of Current Conditions and Future Possibilities

This plan documents the existing conditions at and around Herron Station, and defines key elements of a new station that can be built.

DEFINE ROLES



Clarify Roles for Public Agencies

To deliver the infrastructure improvements in this plan will require work by PRT, City of Pittsburgh’s Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) and other entities, with some tasks completed independently by these agencies, and other tasks being completed through active coordination and collaborative efforts. This plan specifies which agencies are responsible for delivering each element of the plan.

ENCOURAGE TOD



Encourage Development near Herron Station

TOD allows people to integrate transit use into their lives by creating dense, mixed-use places where they can easily access the places they live, work, shop, and play. While PRT owned land at Herron Station is not suitable for development, there are TOD opportunities throughout the station area.

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the Herron Station Area Plan was comprised of four major phases: Review and Analysis, Initial Design Concepts, Preferred Concept, and Implementation. The Steering Committee met five times during the planning process. Three rounds of public engagement provided PRT with community input to shape the plan. Throughout the planning process, PRT’s Planning Department consulted with members of PRT’s Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Committee, an internal inter-departmental group. **Section 1.9 provides an overview of the engagement process.**

The Review and Analysis phase provided PRT with background information to understand existing challenges and opportunities for the station and station area. This phase formed the basis for identifying improvements that would be developed into design concepts. The results of the Review and Analysis phase were presented during Public Meeting Series 1, where the community identified goals for the project and provided additional insight into the station area and elements they would like to see included in the design. Key components of Review and Analysis are summarized in **Chapter 2: Station Area Plan.**

During the Initial Design Concepts phase, PRT developed two design alternatives for Herron Station that compared different strategies for achieving the goals set during the first public meeting series. The Initial Design Concepts were presented to the Steering Committee and subsequently during Public Meeting Series 2, where participants weighed in on which elements of the two concepts best aligned with their goals and whether any additional elements were missing.

During the Preferred Concept phase, PRT developed a single design concept that reflected feedback from the public, stakeholders, and PRT’s TOC Committee. The Preferred Concept was presented during Public Meeting Series 3 where participants provided feedback about the design and discussed how the design aligns with their goals. The preferred concept for the station design and other improvements is shown in **Chapter 3: Conceptual Design**, and the opportunity for TOD in the broader Herron Station Area is described in **Chapter 4: Building a Transit-Oriented Community.**

Chapter 5: Implementation Strategies describes actions that PRT and its partners can take to advance both capital projects from the Preferred Concept and programs that support the project’s goals.

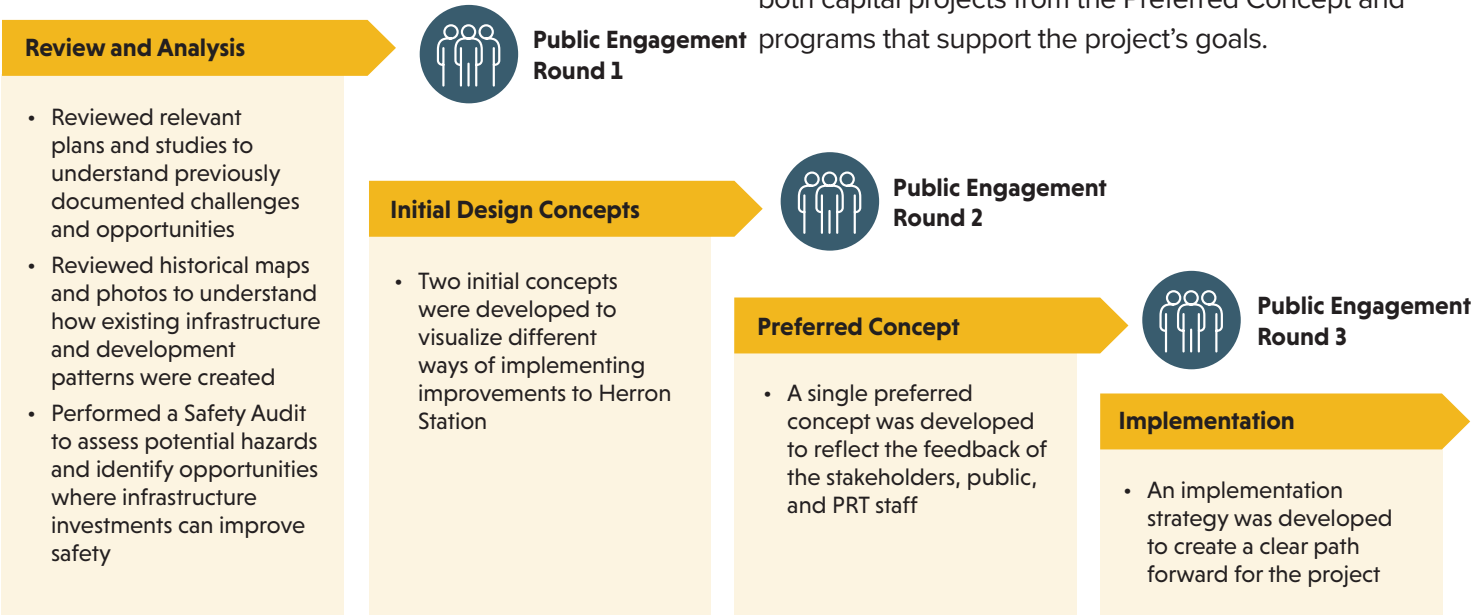
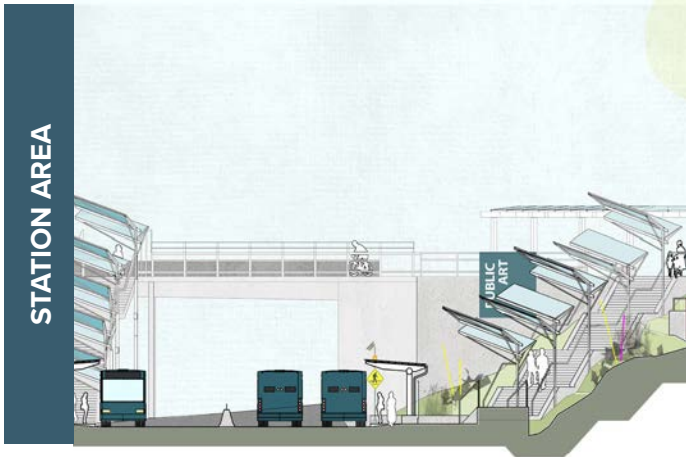


Fig.4 Planning Process Diagram

1.5 ANALYSIS AT THREE SCALES

PRT considered the role of stations in accessing transit, as part of the communities they exist in and as part of the overall MLK Jr. East Busway and Pittsburgh’s transit system. To understand how Herron Station integrates with its adjacent neighborhoods and the broader region, PRT considered three scales:



- At the station area scale, PRT considered:**
- General physical condition and natural environment of the station especially concerning accessibility and station comfort
 - How current riders use the station
 - How riders access the station on foot, and transfer from busway services to bus route 54D
 - How the current station contributes to buses running on time for regular service and special events



- At the community context scale, PRT considered:**
- Key transformations in the surrounding area that could be supportive of TOD
 - Land use and past planning efforts
 - Physical condition of infrastructure
 - Economic trends in the adjacent area
 - Cultural context with regards to community identity, place-making, and public art
 - Community use patterns and perceptions
 - Environmental context such as stormwater conveyance and ecological systems



- At the transit corridor scale, PRT considered:**
- Improving connectivity to other major destinations
 - Regional economic trends that affect ridership and development near Herron Station
 - How investment at Herron Station can be coordinated and timed to complement other PRT and partner projects along the East Busway and within the broader region

1.6 A TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD STATION

To provide context-sensitive recommendations, PRT’s TOD Guidelines sort its station areas into six categories based on density. The existing Herron Station was classified as a Transit Neighborhood station.

Transit Neighborhood stations are predominantly residential in character, with roughly two residents for each job in the neighborhood. These areas are often appropriate for three to five story buildings, have medium density, with development lot coverage varying from 30% to 70%.

■ Station Type - Transit Neighborhood

Description

- Neighborhood feel - neither distinctly urban nor suburban
- Medium density
- Mostly residential use

Multimodal Highlights

- Enhance multimodal access with infrastructure improvements
- Park and Ride not appropriate except at end of line
- Enhance drop-off access at locations near main streets
- Connect to existing multimodal networks including on-street transit

Walkability Highlights

- Provide safe, visible connections around station and neighborhood streets
- Provide alternative pedestrian routes off fast-moving streets
- Decrease block size
- Consider wayfinding

Development Highlights

- Three to five stories
- 30% to 70% lot coverage
- Multi-family or townhouses
- Building design should match the feel and needs of the specific neighborhood
- Build higher density close to the station

Keys to Success

- Market transit connections
- Rebuild and reconnect pedestrian infrastructure
- If vacancy is high, plan development and infrastructure for future density

Local Examples

- Crafton Station (Crafton)
- Homewood Station (Pittsburgh)

Due to their predominantly residential character, these stations are more likely to serve as a transit origin than a destination. Transit service may be frequent on both fixed guideway and local transit services. Pedestrian connections are critical to ensure that nearby residents can easily access the station, with special attention warranted to overcoming barriers that could include topography, bodies of water, or human-made barriers such as railroads, bridges, walls, and major streets.

Fig.5 Adapted from 2015 TOD Guidelines

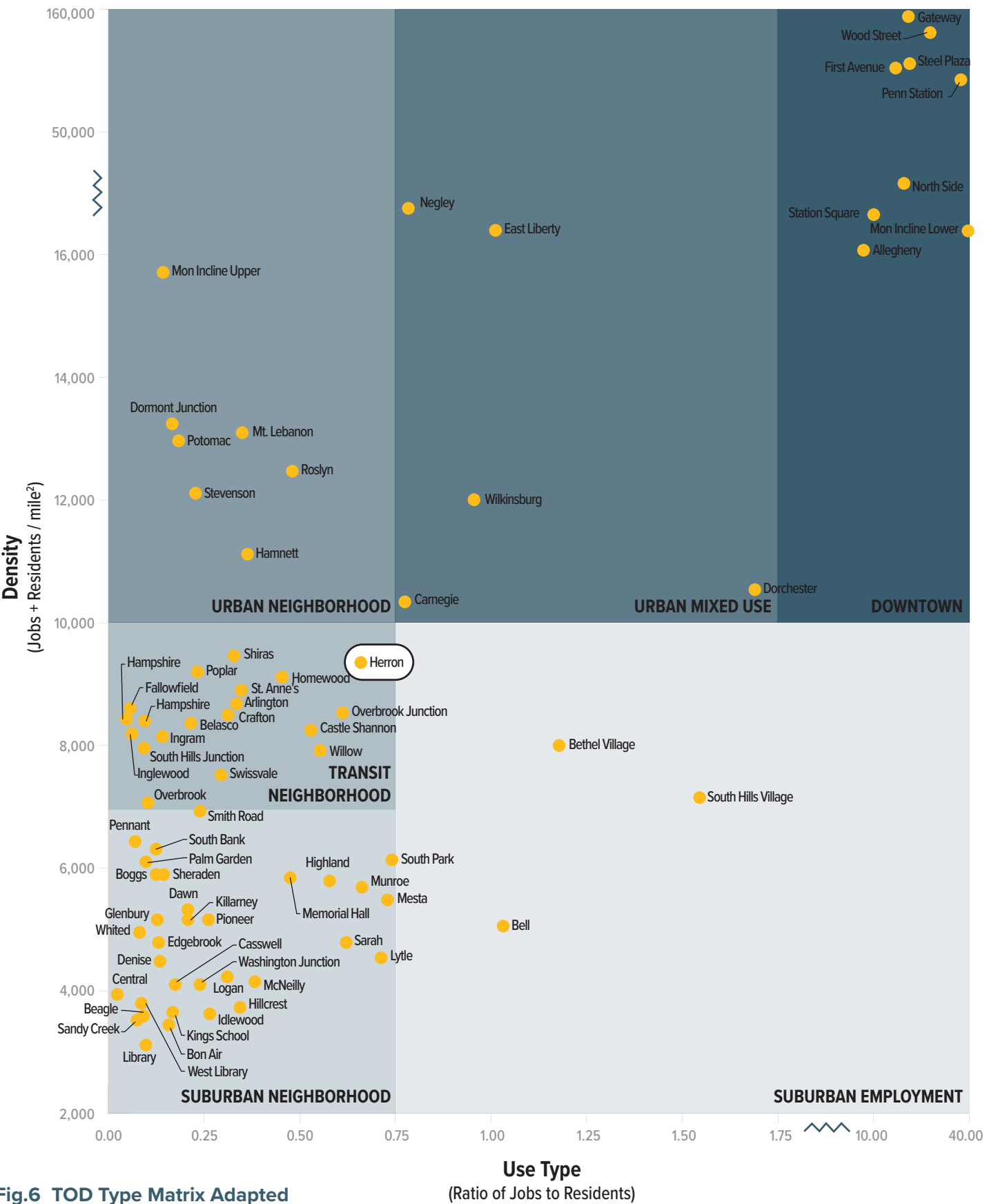


Fig.6 TOD Type Matrix Adapted from PRT's 2015 TOD Guidelines

1.7 HERRON STATION: URBAN CONTEXT

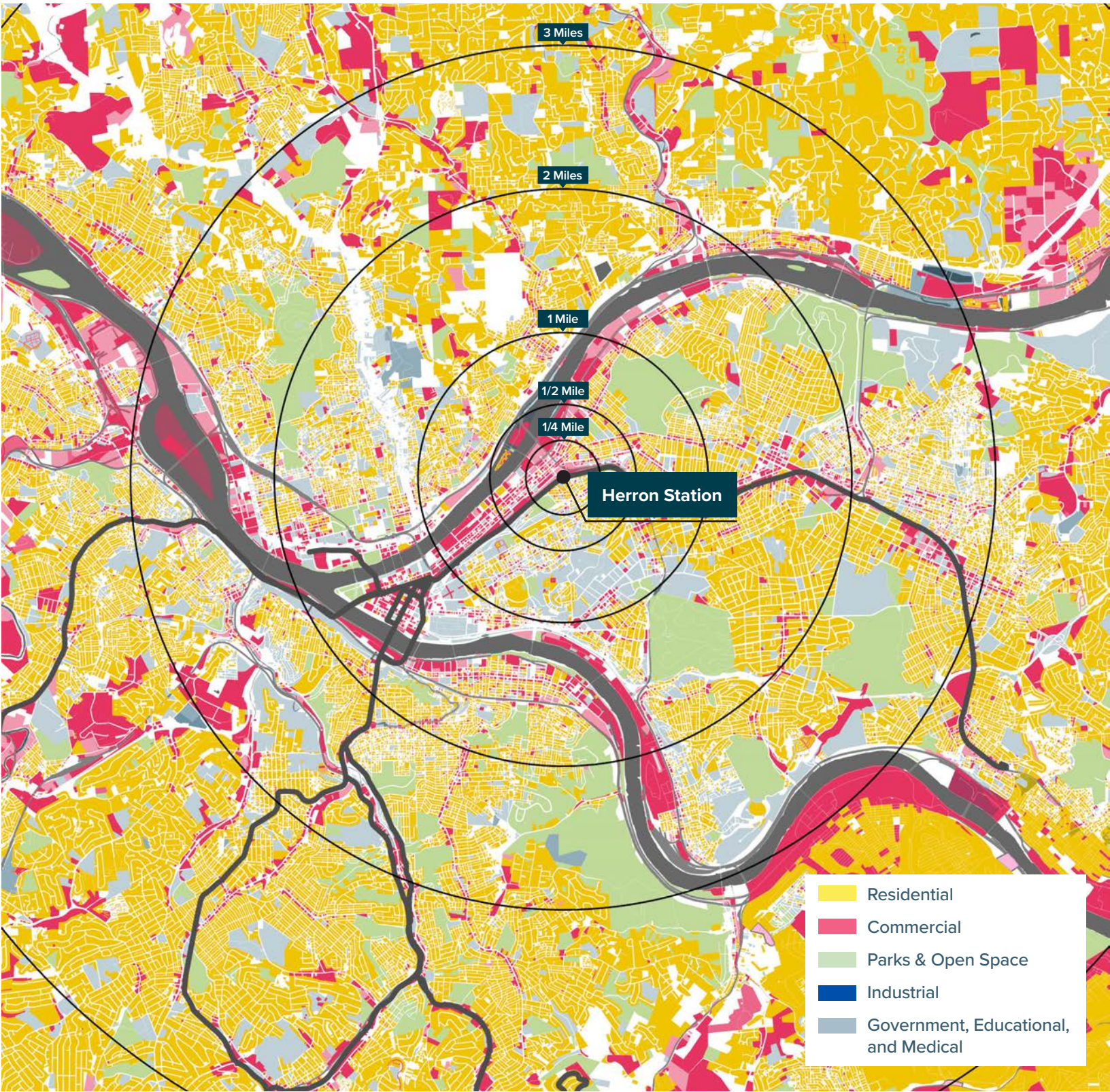


Fig.7 Map of Regional Land Use



The Herron Station Area is defined by two major pieces of transportation infrastructure around which the larger urban context has developed over time: the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Herron Avenue Bridge. With an alignment from the southwest to east-northeast of Herron Station, the railroad lies just north of the East Busway and creates an impassable barrier for pedestrian and vehicular north-south movements. The exception is Herron Avenue Bridge, which stretches 850 feet from the intersection of Herron and Liberty Avenues on the north side of the railroad, to the entrance of Herron Station at Ruthven Street on the south side of the railroad.

On the south side of the railroad and East Busway, the Polish Hill neighborhood surrounds Herron Avenue on both sides as it rises from Herron Station to Bigelow Boulevard. The neighborhood is heavily residential, with some businesses including a funeral home, a metal fabrication shop, a cafe, a few tattoo shops, and a few bars. While there is no large-scale development in the neighborhood, there is evidence of recent investment in existing residential properties, as well as some new infill residential construction.

Herron Station Area Over Time

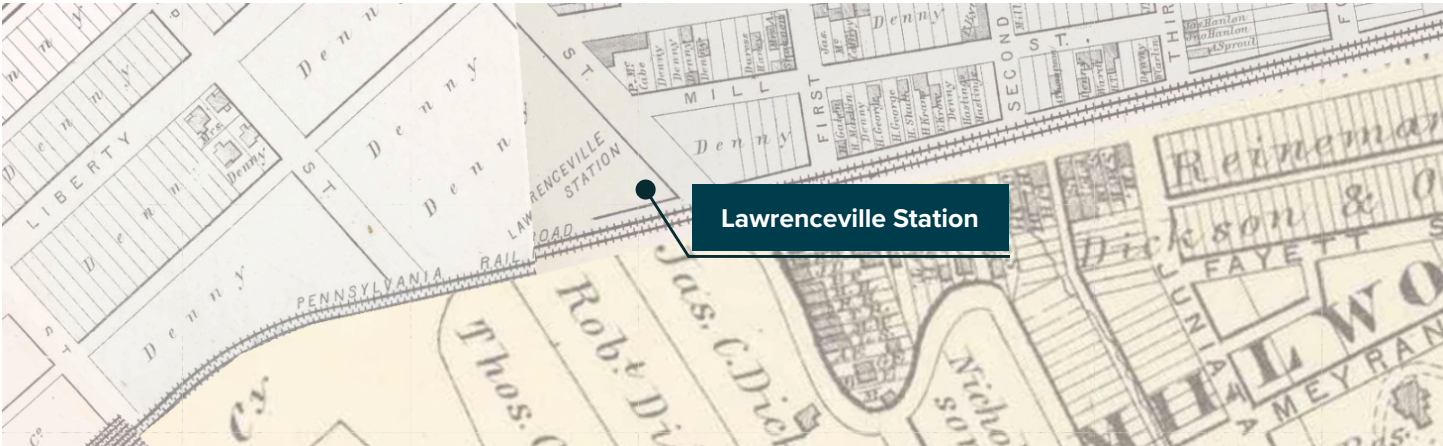


Fig.8 In 1872, Lawrenceville was growing along the Pennsylvania Railroad and had its own station where today’s Herron Station is located.

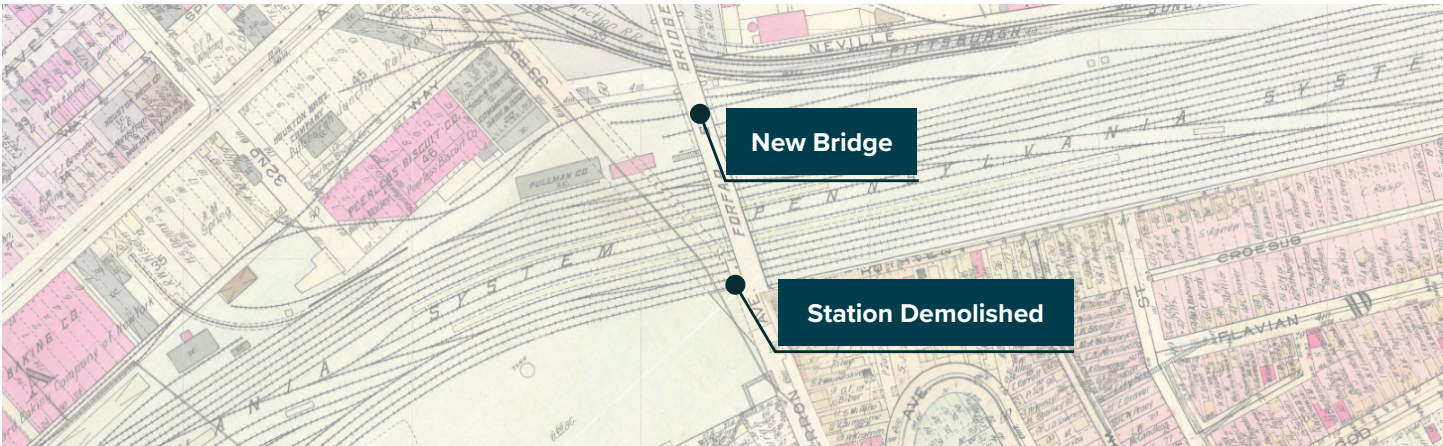


Fig.9 By 1923, the railroad had expanded to create more switching yard space. The busy rail infrastructure necessitated a new bridge which is today’s Herron Avenue Bridge.



Fig.10 Aerial images from 1939 show the railroad, Herron Avenue Bridge, Iron City Brewery, and surrounding neighborhood development.

On the north side of the railroad, Lawrenceville and the Strip District are more densely developed with more commercial development and more high-density residential, some of which is being built in large apartment complexes such as the Mulberry Lofts and Brewer’s Block developments.

Steep slopes and a railroad constrain development opportunity immediately adjacent to Herron Station. Elsewhere within the station area, the surrounding neighborhoods have over 300 intersections per square mile, consistent with some of the denser, more mixed-use parts of Pittsburgh. As current development trends continue in Polish Hill, the Strip District, and Lawrenceville, it is possible that the Herron Station Area will move from the Transit Neighborhood to denser, more mixed-use Urban Neighborhood typology in the future.

Finally, in the near term, the City of Pittsburgh is also considering a rezoning action that would increase allowable densities within the station area. These trends suggest PRT can realize many TOC goals if Herron Station can be better connected to surrounding areas.



Fig.11 New housing under construction in Polish Hill



Fig.12 The new Brewer’s Block development near Liberty Avenue and 33rd Street



Fig.13 Doughboy Square at the intersection of Penn Avenue and Butler Street in Lawrenceville



Fig.14 Former Donny’s Place club across from Herron Station at Herron Avenue and Ruthven Street

1.8 HERRON STATION: TRANSIT CONTEXT

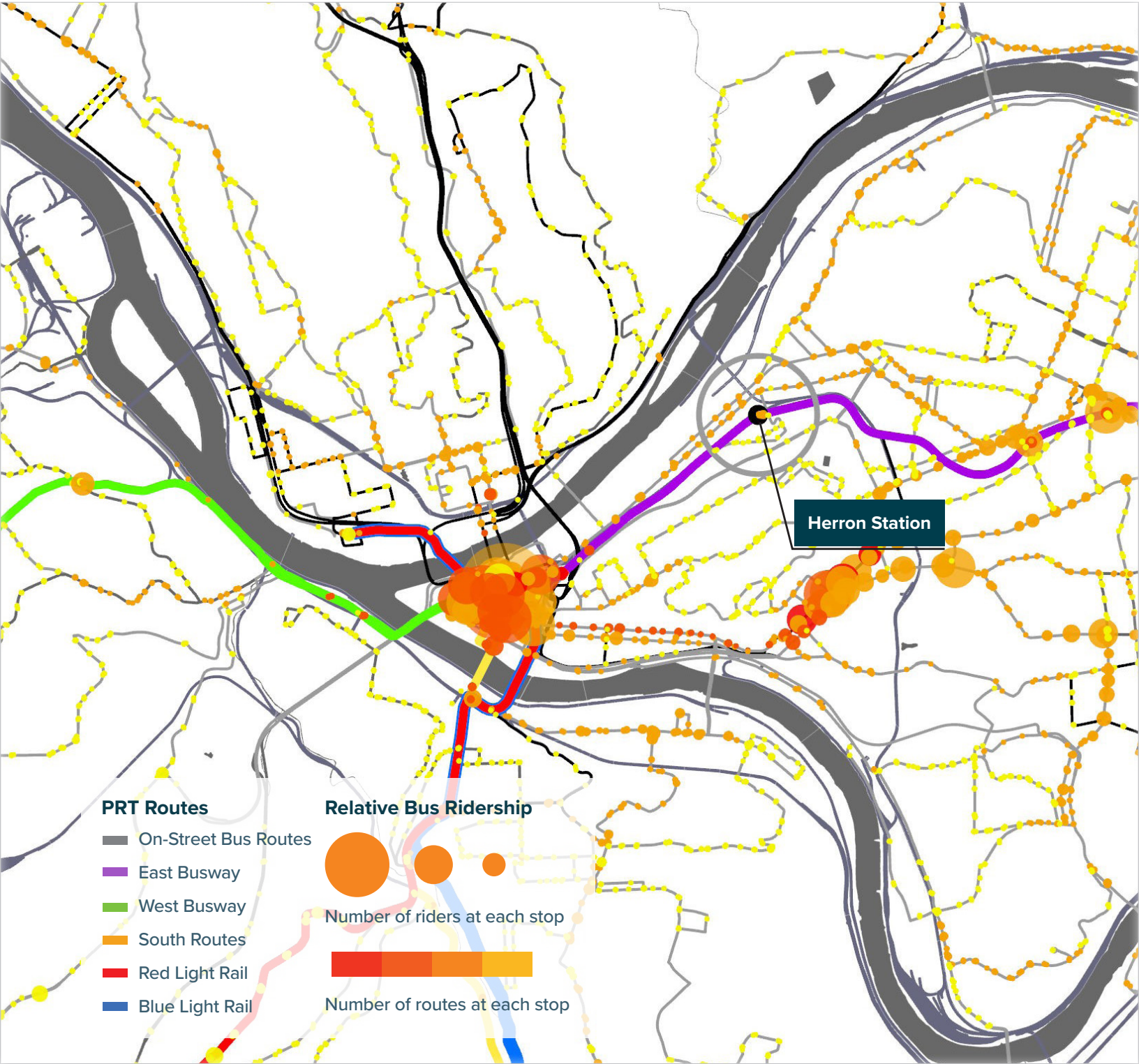
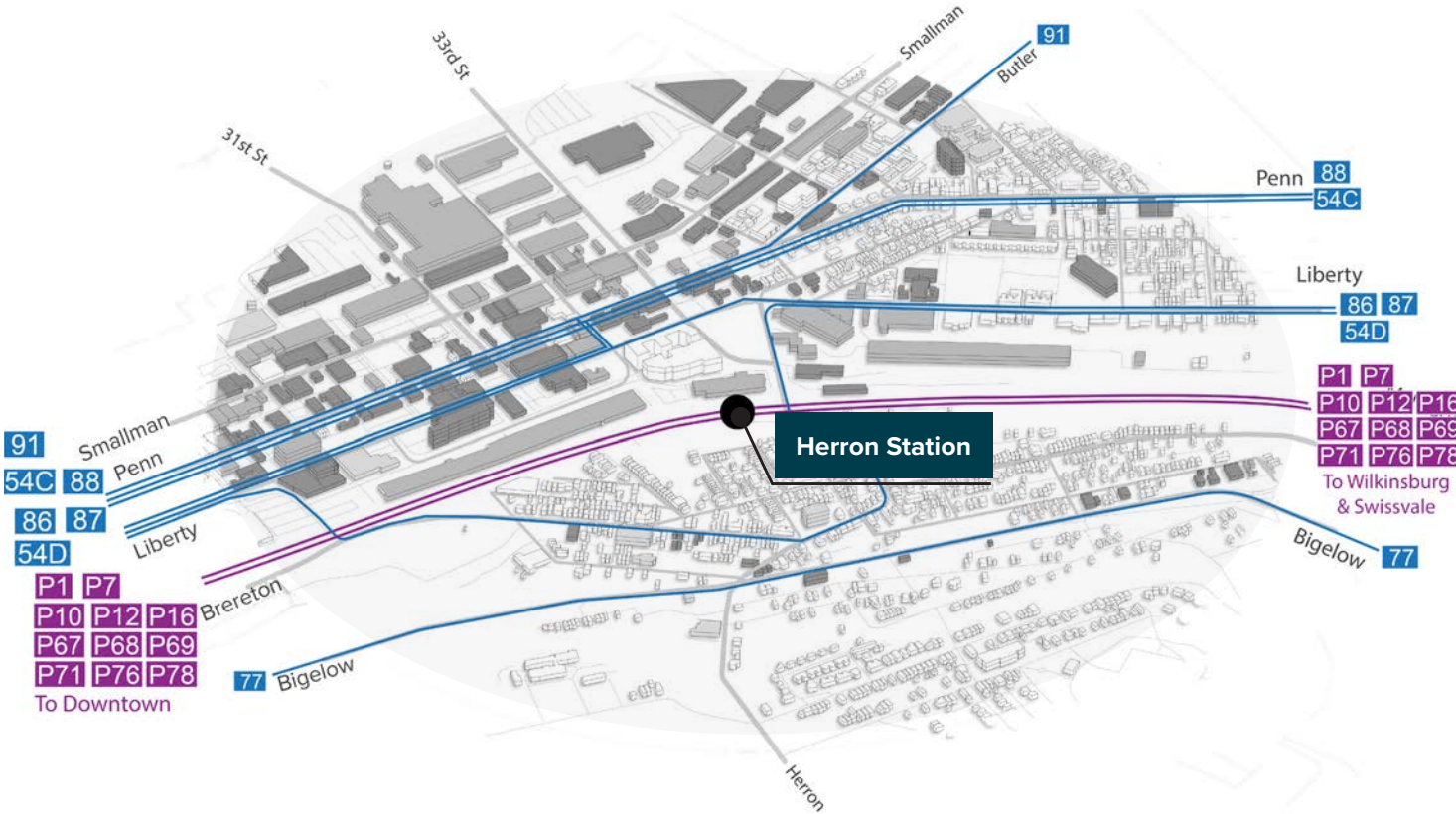


Fig.15 Map of PRT's Transit Network with Relative Ridership Volumes



Herron Station is located on the MLK Jr. East Busway and is the first stop outside of downtown after Penn Station. This station is served by the P1 busway route and 54D on-street bus route, as well as by the express bus routes that utilize the East Busway. The East Busway service provides shorter than 10-minute headways during peak periods, 15-minute headways during midday service, 20-minute headways in early evening, and 30-minute headways after 10:00 P.M. On-street service connecting to the North Side, Strip District, Oakland, and South Side at Herron Station is provided by PRT bus route 54D, which runs at roughly a 50-minute headway over the Herron Avenue Bridge past Herron Station.

While Polish Hill has more limited transit service that includes the 50-minute headway route 54D and the 45-minute headway route 77, Lawrenceville and the Strip District have significantly more transit service, with routes 86, 87, 88, and 91 combining to provide an effective four-minute headway between Lower Lawrenceville and Downtown Pittsburgh. The high frequency of these routes and their location in the heart of Lawrenceville and the Strip District make them attractive services, particularly for riders headed downtown.

1.9 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Purpose

The project team designed a community engagement plan for the Herron Station Area Plan to engage directly with riders who currently use the station, as well as residents within the surrounding communities. The plan included a variety of in-person and online input methods to yield diverse voices and provide the adjacent neighborhoods with a sense of ownership in the station area plan. The project team’s goal was to work collaboratively with community organizations and stakeholders to implement an engagement plan that prioritized clear, consistent, transparent, and equitable communication with the public and stakeholders to solicit input, build consensus, and integrate public input into the decision-making process for the Herron Station.



Fig.16 PRT used signage throughout the station area to promote the planning process

Types of Engagement:

Public Meetings

Public meetings provided the project team the opportunity to promote transparency and foster two-way communication with the public. These meetings were held online via Zoom, during each of the three community engagement series. The meetings were advertised through yard signs posted at the station and in the surrounding neighborhoods, PRT media outlets (including social media and the project website), ads were shared with the local community organizations and Steering Committee to promote to their membership and networks, and email invitations were sent to people who provided their email address through the project website or other engagement events held for the station area plan.

Online Engagement

The project team created a Herron Station Area Plan website (located at <https://engage.rideprt.org/herron>), which was used to share information about the project, gather input from the public, and advertise public meetings and pop-ups. The website was updated at the start and conclusion of each of the three series of community engagement.

For full transparency, the project team recorded all comments received, regardless of method (in-person pop-up event, community meeting, online public meeting, and the website) and included in the public comment section on the project website during each round of engagement.

Community Meetings and Pop-Ups

Knowing that general public meetings do not reach everyone, the project team worked closely with the Steering Committee to either attend existing community meetings or hold small, in-person pop-up events at key locations in the adjacent neighborhoods. At each pop-up, the project team displayed graphics that help introduce the project, planning process and the overall engagement process, asked a series of questions that helped unearth how neighbors understand and connect to the project area and station, and collected feedback about what improvements were desired. All of these efforts were promoted through the same channels as the public meetings.

Steering Committee

PRT established a Steering Committee to help guide the station area plan. The Steering Committee included representatives from Allegheny County Economic Development, City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning (DCP) and the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI), Lawrenceville Corporation, Lawrenceville United, Polish Hill Civic Association, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), Strip District Neighbors, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA).

The Steering Committee’s provided an opportunity for members to share their knowledge of the station, relevant studies and planned projects, and as a voice of the surrounding neighborhoods. Steering Committee members reviewed project work, provided feedback, and assisted with planning, staffing, and promoting community engagement events for the station area plan.



PRT engaged a Steering Committee of local residents and community organizations to establish objectives for an improved Herron Station. Those include:

Improving the experience within the Herron Station site for PRT riders by modernizing the station in alignment with current East Busway standards

Making Herron Station easier and safer to access from adjacent neighborhoods

Coordinating public realm improvements near Herron Station with planned and in-progress projects from the preservation of the Herron Avenue Bridge to new development within the station area

Making Herron Station more welcoming with improved shelters, ramps, sight lines, and public art

Increasing the visibility of Herron Station through design strategies that emphasize the site’s unique location and topography

Creating a more sustainable Herron Station that supports healthy forestry and native plants, manages stormwater effectively, and provides opportunities to meet climate goals by locating solar power on-site

■ Round 1 of Engagement
March 2023 to June 2023

The project consisted of three rounds of engagement to reach the community directly at different phases of the planning process. Each phase had its own set of discussions and feedback that drove the project to completion.

■ Public Meetings

Thursday, June 22, 2023 at 11:30 AM and 6:00 PM

This meeting’s goal was to inform, educate and solicit input from the community stakeholders on the Herron project and the station area plan process, and understand the public’s experience of the station area. The public meetings were held via Zoom and were recorded and uploaded to the website. The 11:30 AM meeting had eight attendees and the 6:00 PM meeting had two attendees. Through conversations with the public, some main themes arose, which are highlighted in the “What We Heard” section.

■ Steering Committee Meetings

Friday, May 5, 2023 at 12:00 PM
at Desmone Architects

At the first meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed and discussed the goals of the project which included how the station could be improved for passengers, how connections could be improved, and what development the station could support. Possible project synergies such as the Herron Avenue Bridge Preservation Project and the Liberty and Herron Avenue intersection improvements were also discussed at this meeting. The Steering Committee was eager to find opportunities to connect projects together, and shared some insights into development in the area, specifically in the Strip District.

■ Pop-Ups

- Lawrenceville Farmers Market
(May 30, 2023 from 3:00 PM-7:00 PM)
- Kaibur Coffee
(June 3, 2023 from 12:00 PM-3:00 PM)
- Salem’s Market
(June 13, 2023 from 12:00 PM-2:00 PM)
- West Penn Recreation Center
(June 17, 2023 from 12:00 PM-3:00 PM)
- Open Streets
(June 25, 2023 from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM)

■ Online Engagement

The Herron Station project website featured an interactive map, on which people could provide comments relevant to things they like, accessibility gaps, amenity gaps, and safety concerns. Over 166 comments were collected.

■ What We Heard In Round 1



Infrastructure in the area – Discussions occurred about infrastructure in the area that included the Downing Street stairs, pedestrian bridges in the area, accessibility to the station, and cycling infrastructure.

Green space and maintenance – There are many invasive plants in the area, and while the green space is a valued element of the site, the invasive plants need to be removed.

Platform amenities – Amenities such as real time updates and a ticket kiosk should be provided.

Area development – The surrounding neighborhoods have a substantial amount of development, ranging from affordable, small scale residential infill to large scale, market rate residential projects.



Fig.17 PRT brought the Herron Station Area Plan to an event on Brereton St. in Polish Hill

■ Round 2 of Engagement
July 2023 to October 2023

The goal of this round was to inform, educate and solicit community input on the Herron Station project and the station area plan process, and present the initial station design concepts. Through conversations with the public, some main themes arose, which are highlighted in the “What We Heard” section to the right.

■ Public Meetings

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 11:30 AM and
Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Two design concepts were developed and presented to the public, prioritizing different elements in the station area. The project team reviewed community input from round one, asked about preferences between the concepts, and introduced elements of sustainability, landscape design, wayfinding, and lighting.



Fig.18 The second round of engagement included pop-ups throughout the station area.

■ Steering Committee Meetings

Friday, July 21, 2023 at 1:00 PM at Desmone Architects

At the second Steering Committee meeting, the project team provided an update on the progress, overall opportunity areas were introduced, and what PRT’s role would be in each of those areas. Those areas and roles were as follows:

- Herron Avenue Bridge to Lawrenceville – PRT as advocate
- Inbound stairs to bridge – PRT as partner
- Street level station entrance – PRT as partner
- Herron Avenue to Polish Hill – PRT as advocate
- Herron Station platform and amenities – PRT as leader
- Herron Station outbound access – PRT as leader
- Downing Street stairs – PRT as advocate
- Green space at Downing Street – PRT as leader
- Wayfinding to station – PRT as advocate
- Monday, August 28, 2023 at 1:00 PM at the Lawrenceville Library

Monday, August 28, 2023 at 1:00 PM at the Carnegie Library in Lawrenceville

The third Steering Committee meeting introduced the two design concepts developed for Herron Station. In addition to the design concepts, additional elements around the station were discussed. These included sustainability, wayfinding, lighting, and station gateways.

■ Pop-Ups

- Polish Hill Arts Festival
(September 17, 2023 from 12:00 PM-3:00 PM)
- Salem’s Market
(September 27, 2023 from 12:00 PM-2:00 PM)
- Lawrenceville Farmers Market
(October 3, 2023 from 3:00 PM-7:00 PM)
- Kaibur Coffee
(October 15, 2023 from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM)
- Strip District Neighbors Town Hall
(October 17, 2023 from 5:00 PM-8:00 PM)

■ Online Exercise

The two concept options were presented online, where Concept A and Concept B were placed in a “slider” by which the two concepts could be easily compared. Following the “slider” was a board of sticky notes, where people left comments remarking on their preferred concept or elements that were still missing.



Fig.19 PRT solicited input on two concepts for the design of Herron Station

■ What We Heard In Round 2



Green space – Community members value the green space at Herron Station

Connectivity– Users of the station would like better ways to access the station, including safer streets, sidewalks, intersections, steps to Downing Street, and cycling infrastructure.

Station platform – Riders requested improved canopies and better lighting.

Parking – Some residents would like to improve the parking along PRT’s Downing Street property in Polish Hill.

■ Round 3 of Engagement
November 2023 to February 2024

■ Public Meetings

Tuesday February 6, 2024, Thursday February 8, 2024, and Wednesday January 31, 2024

The final round of engagement was conducted differently than the first two rounds. Rather than host pop-up events in the neighborhoods, the project team attended three existing community meetings, at which the final Herron Station Plan was presented alongside other community topics. In addition to a presentation, boards were set up about the project, and attendees were invited to review the final plan, ask questions, and provide any final comments.



Fig.20 PRT brought printed boards showing the Herron Station design to each neighborhood's community meeting

- Strip District Neighbors Town Hall (January 31, 2024)
- Polish Hill Civic Association (February 06, 2024)
- Lawrenceville United (February 08, 2024)

Thursday, February 15, 2023 at 6:00 PM Online via Zoom

At the final community meeting for the Herron Station Area 10% Design, the project team presented the final design concept for this phase, as well as covered the other projects in the area which will contribute to the Herron Station area experience.

■ Steering Committee Meetings

Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at 3:00 PM Online via Microsoft Teams

At the fourth Steering Committee meeting, the project team presented updates to community engagement and highlighted how the change in approach to engagement has been successful (utilizing Pop-Ups at preexisting events). In addition, the Steering Committee discussed Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) implementation strategies, with the understanding that PRT does not have any developable land at this station.



Fig.21 PRT presents the Herron Station design to Strip District Neighbors

Thursday, December 7, 2023 at 1:00 PM at Desmone Architects

The last Steering Committee meeting started with a site visit, where the project team discussed design elements at the station itself. This gave the Steering Committee the opportunity to better understand the scale of some design elements, and experience some of the site challenges. The presentation then covered recent community engagement and a continuation of the final design.

■ Online Update

The public meeting recording, and the slides, were made available on the project website, along with the final station area design. Comments and questions collected at the community meetings were posted, and people could post additional comments and questions as well.



Fig.22 PRT presents the Herron Station design to the Polish Hill Civic Association

■ What we Heard in Round 3



Project Timeline – People who live in the station area or who use the station are excited about the conceptual design and support timely implementation.

Station area improvements – Improvements to the Herron Avenue Bridge, connections to 33rd Street and Penn Avenue, intersection enhancements at Liberty Avenue and Ruthven Street, and stairs to Downing Street are all priorities that should be advanced.

Station landscaping – Landscaping at the station should prioritize creating quality green space and include investments in trees.

STATION AREA PLAN

Located along the MLK Jr. East Busway, Herron Station is a unique asset. Connecting residents quickly to Downtown Pittsburgh, Shadyside, East Liberty, Homewood, Wilkinsburg, and Swissvale, Herron Station is a gateway to opportunity. Herron Station could play a vital role in connecting residents to employment opportunities, educational institutions, essential services, and recreational facilities throughout the Pittsburgh area. Areas of Polish Hill, the Strip District, and Lower Lawrenceville are within a 10-minute walk of Herron Station. Each of these neighborhoods is experiencing historic levels of development interest and investment. Despite the

walkable quality of these neighborhoods and an active development environment, Herron Station is currently the lowest ridership station along the MLK Jr. East Busway in part because the station is geographically and topographically separated from surrounding neighborhoods.

Public comment reflected the limited visibility of the station with comments including: “It’s unclear on how to even get to the station” and “There should be wayfinding in Doughboy Square for a better connection to the station”

2.1 THE HERRON STATION AREA



Fig.23 Aerial View of Herron Station Area via Google Earth showing key station area landmarks

2.2 PREVIOUS PLANNING

Planning Timeline for the Herron Station Area



Key Takeaways From Previous Plans

Herron Station is near areas with great development potential.

- Across Herron Avenue Bridge and adjacent to Herron Station exists development opportunities for mixed- use properties.
- One challenge to development is the steep terrain that is near Herron Station in Polish Hill.

Planned development is occurring beyond Herron Station.

- In the Strip District and Lower Lawrenceville development of new housing, retail, and office space is expanding.
- There is an opportunity to highlight Herron Station as an asset to the multiple communities that are growing.

Pedestrian safety improvements could help improve access to Herron Station.

- Improved safety measures for pedestrians will provide a more comfortable experience for all modes of transportation.
- The isolation of the station could be altered by the creation of open and bright access points to the station.

Current residents in Polish Hill would benefit from easier access to the busway.

- The steep terrain makes it challenging for Polish Hill residents to access and utilize the station.
- The creation of an alternative way to access the station could be beneficial.

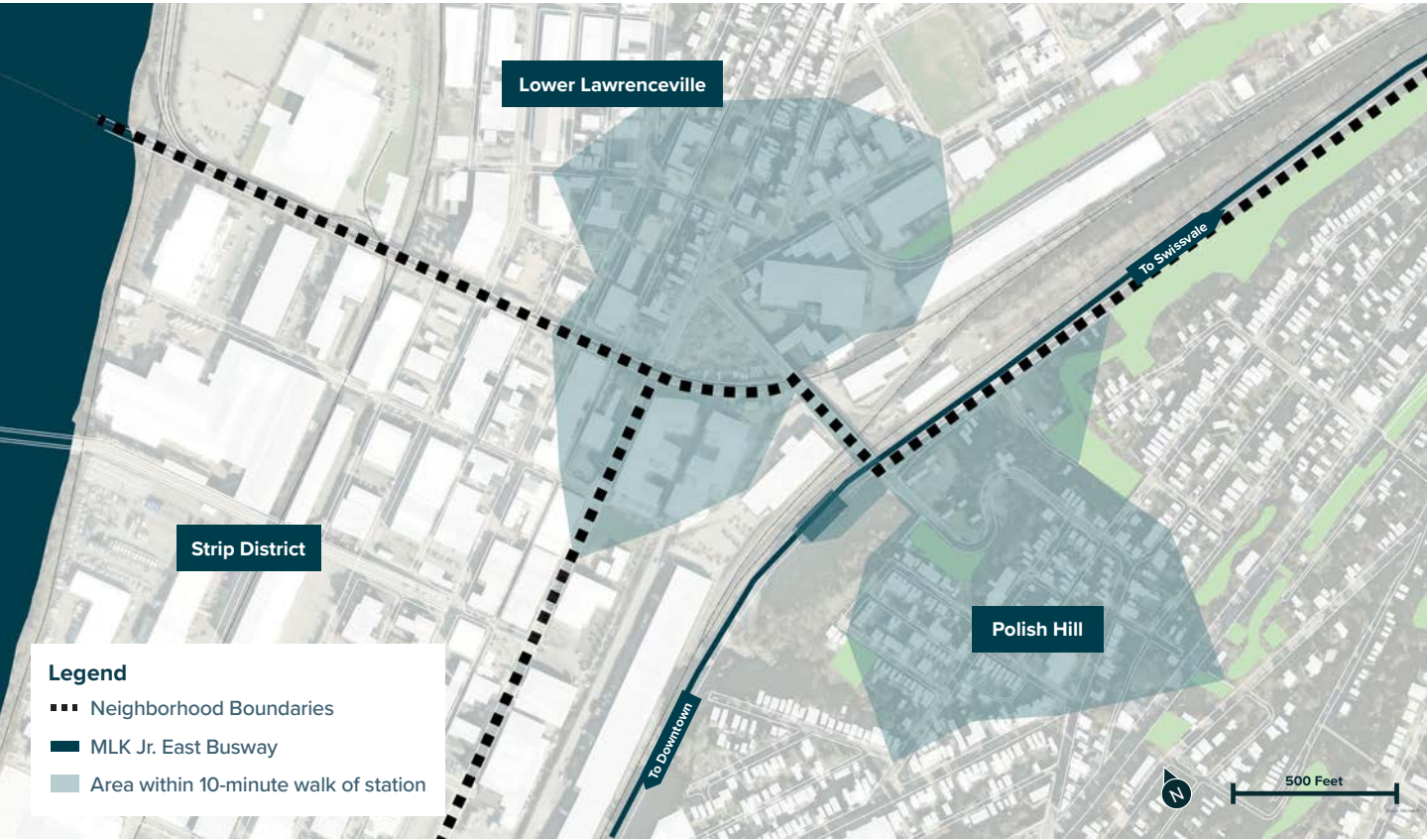


Fig.24 Areas Within a 10-minute Walk of Herron Station

2.3 STATION AREA GATEWAYS

With the proposed conceptual design for Herron Station, access to the station will be improved not only at the station site itself, but also at the Gateways that bring nearby residents to Herron Station.

Polish Hill Gateway

On the Polish Hill side of the station, a new primary connection to the neighborhood will be re-established through the rebuilding and improvement of the Downing Street stairs. In the new design, Polish Hill residents will be able to access the new staircase from Downing Street, and instead of turning to the right at Herron Avenue, the new stairs will turn left to Herron Station, with a few landings where people can stop and rest or take in views of the city.

One resident said “I love the idea of re-orienting the Downing Street stairs toward Herron Station.”



Fig.25 The existing stairs to downing street are currently closed.

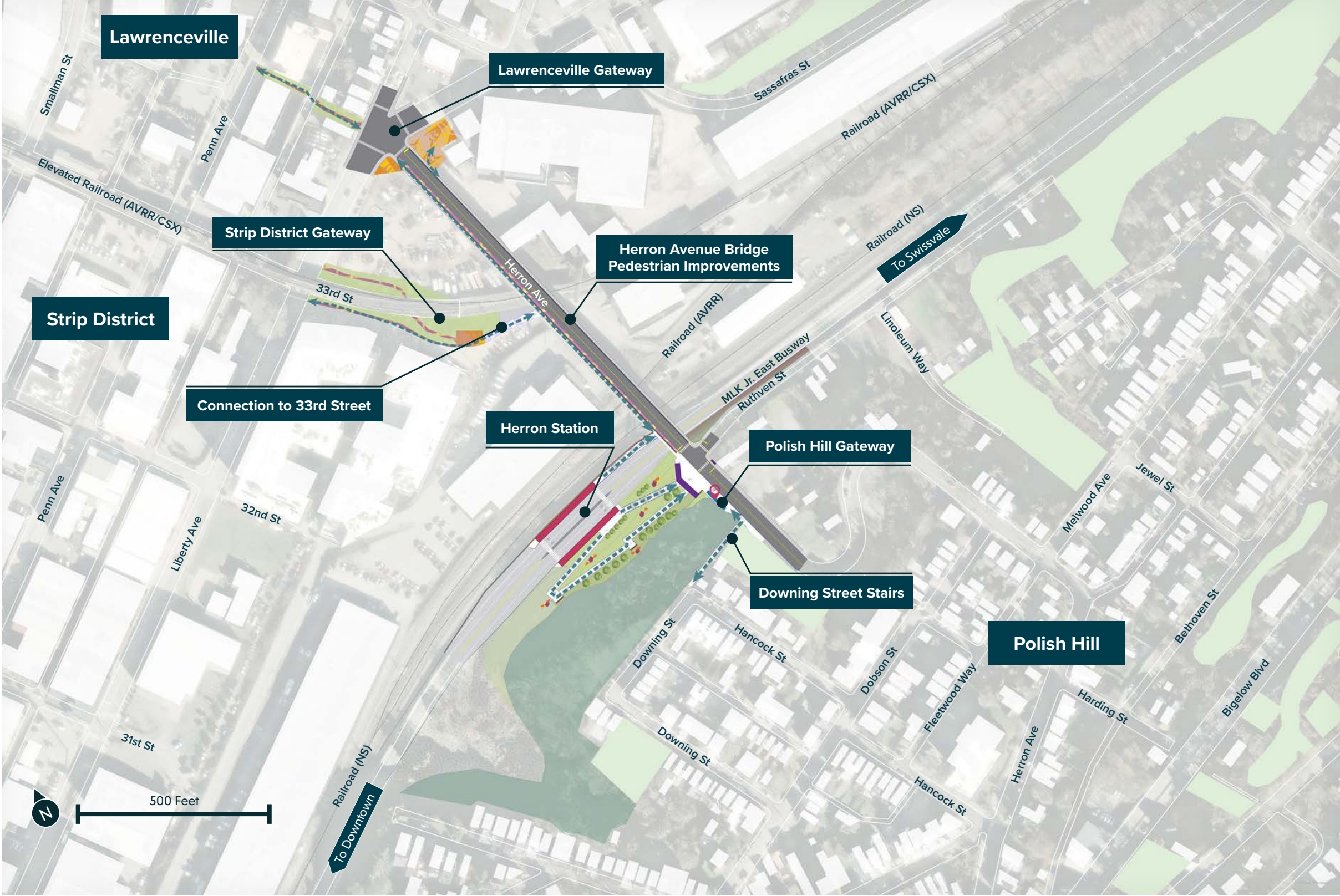


Fig.26 Improvements to Station Area Gateways

Lawrenceville Gateway

To the north, railroads and other infrastructure separate the station from the Strip District and Lower Lawrenceville. The Herron Avenue Bridge serves as the only connection from the station to these neighborhoods. The bridge itself is long, spanning over an eighth of a mile from Liberty Avenue to Ruthven Street. Wide travel lanes create an environment where drivers consistently exceed the posted speed limit, fostering an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians and a dangerous environment for cyclists. Narrow sidewalks are contained between a concrete barrier and cage-like chain link fencing for the entire length of the bridge. Overall, the bridge is an unpleasant experience for pedestrians, deterring use of the station.

The Herron Avenue Bridge makes a direct connection to Lower Lawrenceville through the significant intersection of Liberty Avenue, Herron Avenue, and Ligonier Street.

The City of Pittsburgh’s Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) is currently working on a major redesign of Liberty Avenue through the strip district up to and including the intersection with Herron Avenue and Ligonier Street. Feedback from the Herron Station Area Planning process led to additional enhancements for this intersection that will be incorporated into the City’s design for Liberty Avenue, including an additional crosswalk across Liberty and enhanced bumpouts and landscaping on the Herron Avenue bridge side of the intersection.

In addition to planned improvements for Liberty Avenue, the Herron Station plan envisions an additional pedestrian link between Liberty Avenue, Spring Way, and Penn Avenue through two vacant mid-block parcels. This opportunity would create a stronger connection between Herron Station and Doughboy Square, at the intersection of Penn Avenue, Butler Street, and 34th Street. This connection would have to be established in partnership with the City, neighborhood organizations, and private property owners.

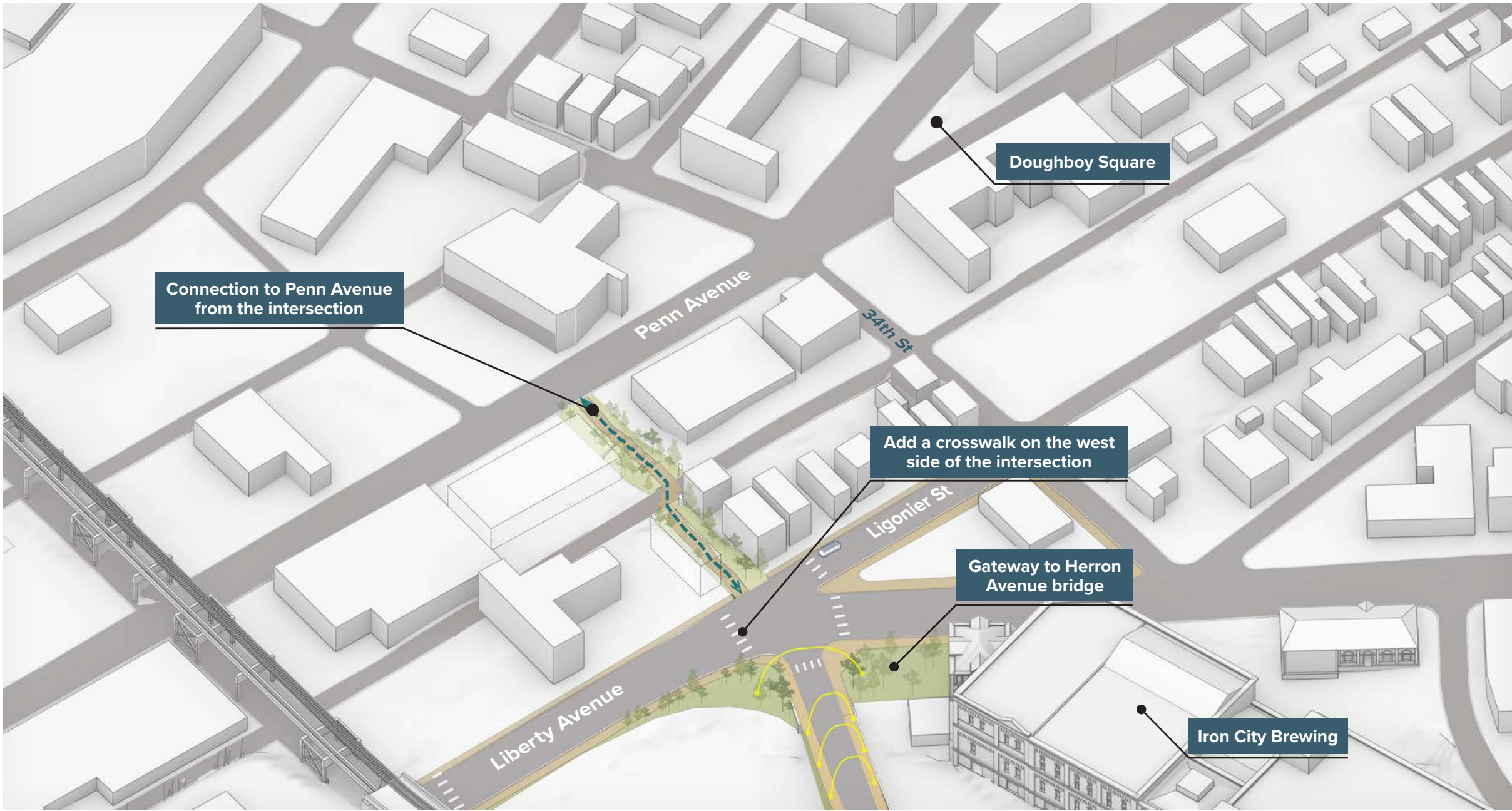


Fig.27 Potential Improvements to the Lawrenceville Gateway

Strip District Gateway

As part of the long-range planning efforts in the study area, PRT envisions a potential new pedestrian stair connection between 33rd Street and the Herron Avenue Bridge connection just south of the elevated railroad trestle that passes under the bridge.

This connection will need to be made in coordination with City of Pittsburgh Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) and adjacent property owners, such as the Brewer’s Block development. By making this connection, the walk time for riders traveling from Liberty Ave could be significantly shortened by eliminating the need to backtrack to the end of the bridge as part of their walk to Herron Station.

A staircase in this location could copy the design elements of the canopies in the remodeled Herron Station, providing a design-based connection between the two sides of the East Busway and the railroad.

At the time of this report in early 2024, the Herron Avenue Bridge is presently undergoing a bridge preservation investment to extend its lifespan by 15 to 20 years. The pedestrian connection could be built in the near-term as a separate project following the preservation project or in the future when the bridge is replaced.

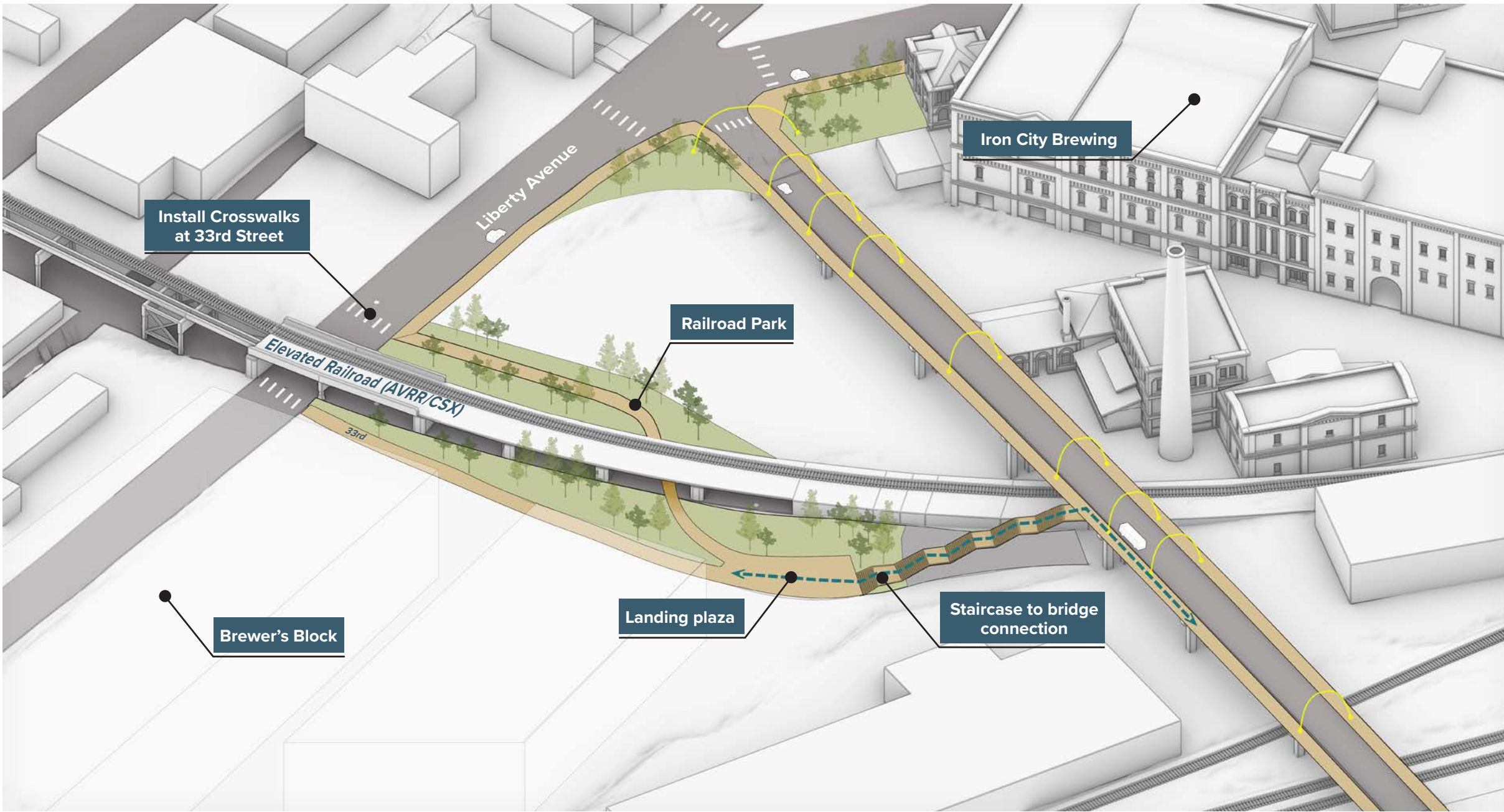


Fig.28 Potential improvements to the Strip District Gateway

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

3.1 HERRON STATION EXISTING CONDITIONS

Platforms and Shelters

The platforms at Herron Station date to the original construction of the MLK Jr. East Busway. The platforms include two stops per platform which are identified as stops A, B, C, and D. Busway-style shelters are located at the forward end of each platform where the P1 bus offers standard busway service. The inbound express stop is unsheltered, and the outbound express stop has a standard prefabricated shelter.

The current configuration includes a single crosswalk at the middle of the platforms. The length of the platforms where buses stop is shorter than the length of current buses. At the time the platforms were constructed, the longest buses were approximately 55 feet. Today's fleet includes articulated buses that are nominally 60 feet in length but are longer when the front-mounted bicycle rack is deployed. The result of this configuration and platform length is that articulated P1 buses partially or completely block the crosswalk. Additionally, this configuration requires that people cross the busway between buses serving the platforms, reducing visibility.



Fig.29 A bus stopped at the inbound platform at Herron Station

Primary Station Access: Outbound Steps and Ramp

Steps and a switchback ramp provide the station's primary access from Herron Avenue. The steps and ramp combine to connect to Herron Avenue at the south end of the Herron Avenue Bridge. The configuration of the steps and ramp date to the original construction of the MLK Jr. East Busway which predates modern accessibility design standards. The ramp to access the platforms is steeper than modern accessible design requirements.

The ramp extends from Herron Avenue parallel to the hillside beyond the end of the outbound platform, where a landing switches back to connect to the base of the stairs at the middle of the platform. In the area bounded by the stairs and ramp, the steep hillside is vegetated with large bushes and small trees. This vegetation reduces visibility of the end of the ramp, creating an area that can feel unsafe, especially at night. The steps and ramp are relatively narrow at approximately six feet wide, with railings on each side.



Fig.30 Steps and a ramp connect the outbound platform to Herron Avenue

Secondary Station Access: Inbound Steps

The inbound steps extend from the side of the Herron Avenue Bridge directly down to the platform level. The stairs have two landings and are covered, but transit riders are exposed to the elements for 180 feet between the base of the stairs and the end of the inbound platform canopy.

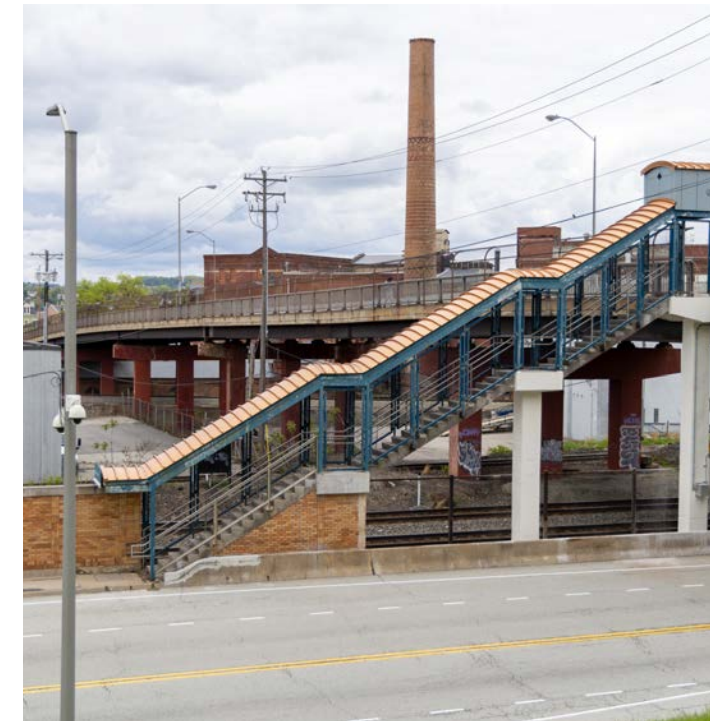


Fig.31 Covered steps connect the inbound platform to Herron Avenue

3.2 OVERVIEW OF STATION DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS

The new design for Herron Station emphasizes improved accessibility, increased visibility, attractive design, and enhanced protection from weather elements such as sun, rain, and snow.

Station Design Improvements

A new street-level transit plaza at Herron Avenue will increase visibility and awareness of the station. The new Herron Station transit plaza will serve as the station's front door and will include bike parking, a POGO bike share station, seating, and a ticket vending machine (TVM). On-street bus stops on Herron Avenue will be realigned for improved connectivity with Herron Station. In coordination with the City of Pittsburgh, pedestrian safety improvements will be made at the intersection of Herron Avenue and Ruthven Street.

Ramps to the will be reconstructed and will be 10 feet wide with a 1:16 slope. In addition to the ADA-required ramp landings, two expanded landings will provide areas of respite and will include shelters. Stairs on the site will be reconstructed and will include canopies providing shade and shelter.

Enhanced Station Landscaping

The new design will remove existing invasive and non-native species of trees and other plants and will replace this with new plantings that are appropriate for this location. The new vegetation will restore native habitat while creating a well-landscaped station area on the outbound side. The new landscape design will also create new opportunities for the incorporation of public art.



Fig.32 Herron Station Conceptual Design

3.3 STREET-LEVEL PLAZA AT RUTHVEN STREET

The entrance to Herron Station from Herron Avenue will be expanded into a plaza with a large canopy in the style exemplified by the recent modernization of Negley Station. The plaza will create a more welcoming entrance for people approaching the station from the bridge, and create a more pleasant location to wait for the PRT's 54D bus. In addition to an improved waiting area, there will sheltered bicycle parking and a POGO bike share station located between the Plaza and the base of the new Polish Hill stairs.

Residents shared that the intersection of Ruthven Street and Herron Avenue “has a confusing traffic pattern and insufficient allowances for pedestrians” and that “visuals and signage to find the station would be very helpful.”



Fig.33 View from Herron Avenue toward the new entry plaza for Herron Station

3.4 ACCESS RAMPS AND STAIRS

An upgraded ramp will provide wheelchair and other rolling access down to the platform level of the station, with new intermediate rest points with shelters. New landscape design will improve sight lines from the ramp, and provide an interesting and varied experience while approaching the platform.

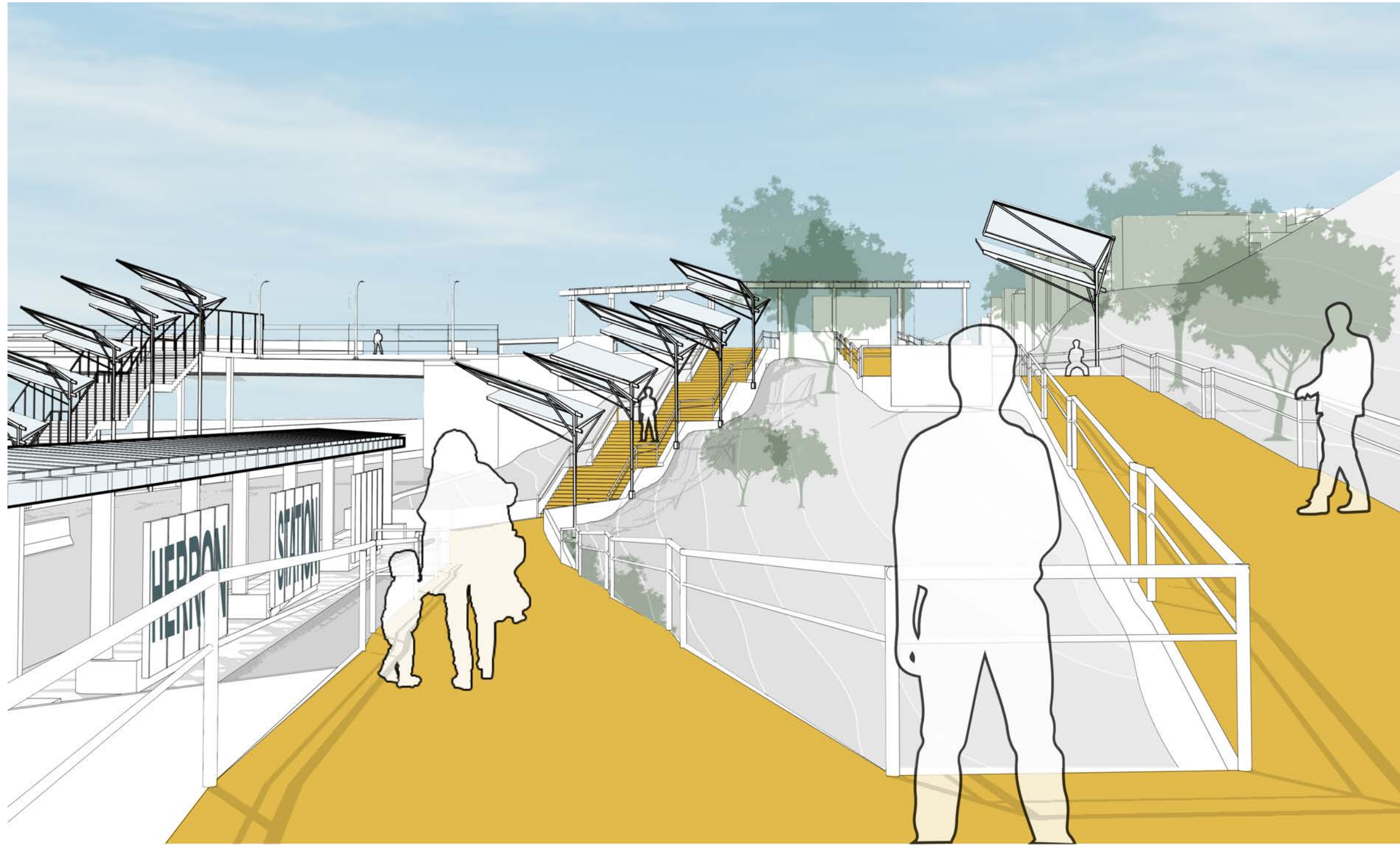


Fig.34 View from the new ramp toward Herron Avenue



Fig.35 Longitudinal section showing the outbound station platform, new outbound staircase, new ramp, and new entry plaza at Herron Avenue



Fig.36 Cross section showing the new platforms at Herron Station and the canopies over the staircases from Herron Avenue

A new staircase will extend from the street level plaza down to the outbound platform, with a set of signature “butterfly” canopies that will collectively provide overlapping shelter for anyone using the stairs.

Mirroring these canopies on the outbound platform will be a new set of canopies over the stairs that currently extend from the Herron Avenue Bridge down to the inbound platform. At the bottom of the stairs, these canopies will be extended to meet the primary platform canopy so that a passenger will be covered the entire time they are walking to or from the inbound platform.

Both platforms will be upgraded with the new, larger East Busway standard canopies, exemplified by those at the recently modernized Negley Station.

At the busway level of the station, two new platforms will be longer and accommodate two 60-foot long articulated buses. A concrete divider will be added along the centerline of the busway, with crosswalks at the ends of each platform, rather than in the middle. The relocation of the crosswalks will improve visibility for pedestrians crossing the busway, and enhance the ability of bus operators to see pedestrians.

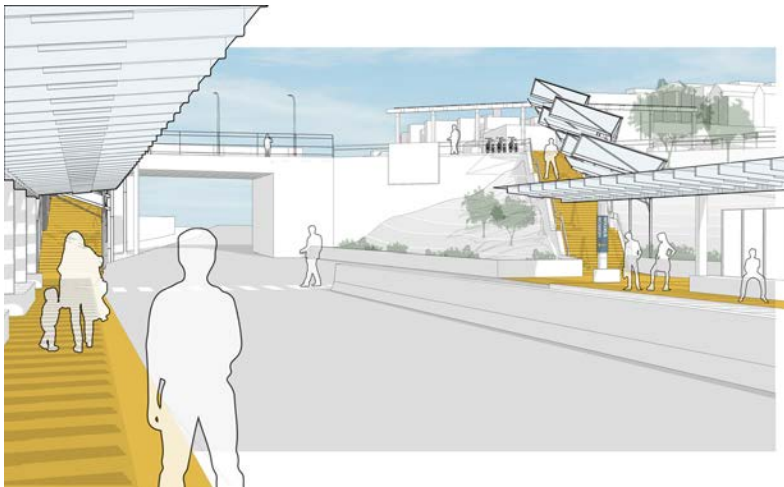


Fig.37 View from the new inbound platform to the Herron Avenue transit plaza

3.5 IMPROVING STATION ACCESS

With a rebuilt and improved staircase, Polish Hill will be reconnected to Herron Station from Downing Street. The staircase will not only provide access, but also act as an amenity offering long-range views over Lawrenceville to the Allegheny River. With multiple landings in between Polish Hill and the station, there will be multiple vantage points to enjoy the view of surrounding neighborhoods and Pittsburgh. While the prior staircase turned away from the station at street level, the new staircase will lead directly to the POGOH bike station and station plaza.

3.6 RAILROAD ACOUSTIC WALL EXTENSION

As the platforms are lengthened, the wall between the railroad and the busway on the inbound side of the station will also be lengthened to attenuate the amount of noise from passing trains experienced by inbound passengers. This also provides a new opportunity for temporary or permanent public art, an element which is highly valued by the community.

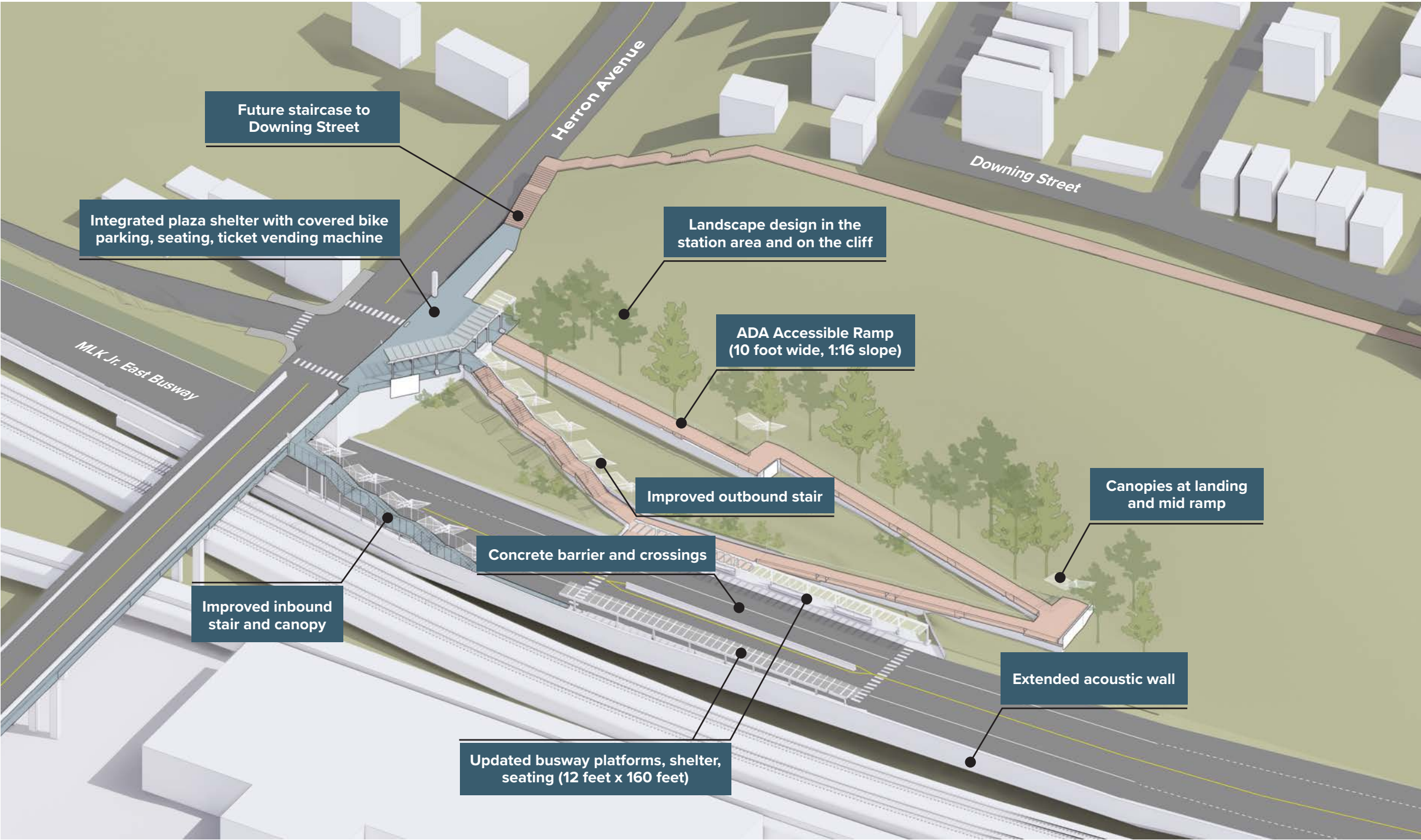


Fig.38 Overview of site-wide improvements

3.7 PUBLIC ART

The new station design provides a variety of opportunities for new public art. With the new ramps and staircase on the outbound side, there will be some new retaining walls that will offer an opportunity for public art on those surfaces. The butterfly canopies will enhance the artistic character of the station, and in the evening, lighting in a variety of locations will provide an opportunity to make the station itself a beacon of artistic interest after dark.

Transit users and the public can interact with community art at Herron Station:

- 1. Riders on the E. Busway can see panels that could incorporate art along the West end of the ramp and the plaza retaining wall.
- 2. People traversing the station plaza along Herron Avenue can see the sculptural signage and information sign.
- 3. Transit users at the station can see the panels along the ramp and sculptures integrated into the landscape. With information signs at the plaza and outbound platform levels.



Fig.39 Artistic lighting throughout the Herron Station area would enhance the station at night

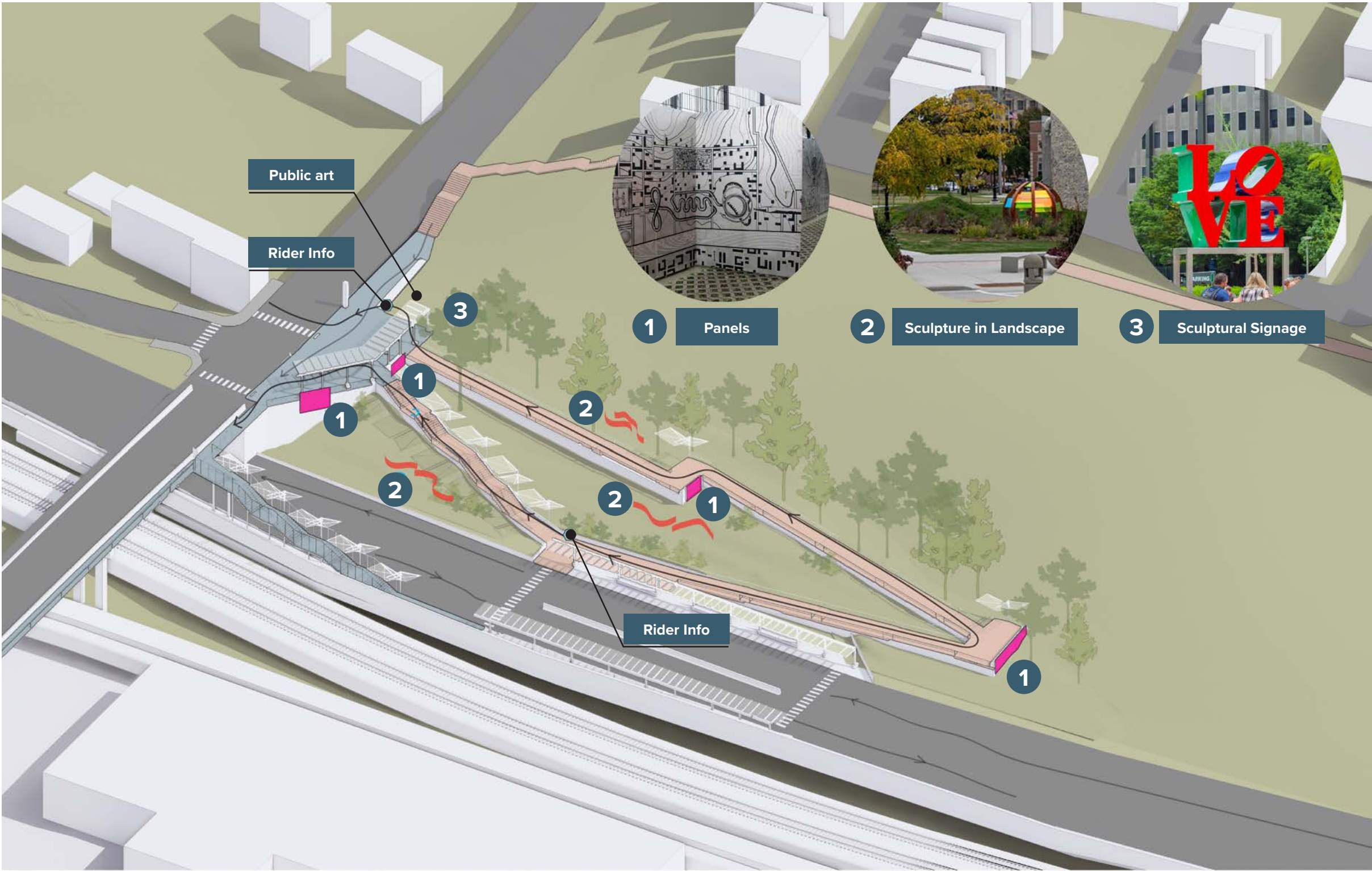


Fig.40 Overview of potential public art locations

BUILDING A TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITY

4.1 OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES

In 2024, almost four years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in where and how Americans work have reshaped transit ridership patterns across the nation, including at PRT. Fewer workers come downtown for 9-to-5 office commutes, and yet transit agencies across the nation are seeing growing strength in corridors with high-frequency service throughout the day.

The East Busway, with 6 to 8 minute rush hour headways and 21-hour-a-day service, is exactly the kind of corridor that can support transit ridership growth. By locating more housing and jobs close to East Busway stations, PRT and local municipalities can increase transit ridership, collect revenue through fares and ground leases to support fiscal sustainability, and make progress toward community goals of equity and climate change mitigation.

Through its Station Improvement Program, PRT recognizes that the MLK Jr. East Busway is already a high-performing transit corridor. Across Allegheny County, roughly nine percent of residents ride public transportation for their commute. Along the East Busway, 24% of residents ride public transportation for their commute. This data suggests that if more

jobs and housing can be located on or near PRT property, the transit usage of residents and workers will likely be among the highest in the Pittsburgh region.

The Washington DC region has found that building homes and workplaces in close proximity to high-capacity transit is a powerful predictor of high ridership.

Washington Metro Mode Share by Distance to Transit

	Office	Residential
Within 600 feet	35%	54%
¼ mile	23%	43%
½ mile	10%	31%

4.2 PRT’S GOALS FOR TRANSIT

Through its 2021 long-range transportation plan, NEXTransit, PRT, and the communities of Allegheny County affirmed several values that describe the type of transit that should exist in the region, with the most widely supported values below.



ACCESSIBLE

“I value a transit system which ensures infrastructure is fully available in every way to those with specific needs, such as physical or mental disabilities, those traveling with infants or small children, those traveling with groceries or other goods, etc.”



AFFORDABLE

“I value a transit system that allows those of all means, including underemployed and unemployed populations, to utilize transit without needing to sacrifice other life sustaining activity, such as buying food, medicine or heating, to do so”.



EFFICIENT

“I value a transit system that operates internally like a business and uses limited public dollars to the greatest extent possible to provide the most effective service possible.”



EQUITABLE

“I value a transit system that not only ensures the fair provision of services to those with limited means or higher risk, but which affirmatively acts to better the services offered to these groups in an effort to combat historical and environmental imbalances in the community.”



SUSTAINABLE

“I value a transit system that enhances the health of communities and the natural environment via its operations with regard to energy use, water use, raw material use, land use, and waste production.”

Community Development Priorities
Near Herron Station

In 2020, a consortium of community-based organizations developed and endorsed a series of development priorities relevant to potential development near Herron Station. Bloomfield Development Corporation (BDC), Lawrenceville Corporation (LC), Lawrenceville United (LU), Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG), Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT), and Polish Hill Civic Association (PHCA) endorsed the development priorities which were created in consultation with the City of Pittsburgh’s Department of City Planning (DCP) and PRT’s Planning Department.

The community development priorities span nine categories which are aligned with but independent of PRT’s TOD Guidelines and goals for transit-oriented communities. They are reflective of thoughtful dialogue between each of the endorsing parties and should continue to steer policy and infrastructure investment within the Herron Station area. The development priorities are adapted here:

Community ownership

Planning and design should be part of an open, public, and transparent process with opportunities for community input and feedback throughout. Planning and design should be managed in a way that is consistent with existing community processes (i.e. ground rules, communication protocols, etc.), and with decision points driven by the community. New development should take into account the effect of construction and work to mitigate negative impacts on adjacent communities.

TOD

New development should maximize proximity to the robust transit service of the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway and on-street bus routes; should connect to adjoining neighborhoods; and should be developed to a level of density according to TOD practices. Structures are multi-use, multi-family, and multi-income. Transportation systems discourage the use or storage of private, single-occupancy autos, encourage other modes of transportation (especially the busway), minimize parking, and promote shared solutions. Consider advertising to residents and workers in these developments. Consider PRT TOD Design Guidelines.

Public space

New development should create new green and open spaces where people can gather, recreate, and connect. New public spaces should incorporate public art, utilize the City’s “percent for art” strategy, and include.

Affordability

Affordable housing is a primary priority for the area. Consistent with the Urban Land Institute’s (ULI) 2017 Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) report, a minimum of 25% of units should be for affordable housing (at or below 50% area median income for rentals and 80% AMI for homeownership). Developments should utilize Housing Choice Vouchers or Project-Based Vouchers to deepen affordability. Developers should consider Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, community land trust set-asides, Tax Increment Financing/Transit Revitalization Investment District proceeds, and other financial instruments. Additionally, “right to return” practices will prioritize housing for residents displaced from the surrounding area. Deed restrictions can enforce permanent affordable housing. Developers should also consider the provision of free or deeply discounted monthly transit passes and bike share subscriptions.

Multi-generational housing

Affordable housing is most keenly needed for families with children and seniors. Housing types, uses, amenities, and public realm space should reflect the need for multi-generational housing such as with the inclusion of units of three bedrooms or more and playgrounds.

Environmental health and sustainability

New development should be supportive of creating a community with clean air, clean water, reduced urban heat island effect (e.g. more trees, less concrete, etc.), better building performance, and better stormwater management.

Mobility and connectivity

Safe, attractive, usable, and abundant connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and riders of public transit should be prioritized over facilities for private automobiles. Developers should consider utilizing parking reductions to help fund bus passes or the use of other forms of mobility besides private automobiles. Universal design principles should also apply and exceeding ADA accessibility standards is an express goal and should not be an afterthought. Developers should create, with the community, a transportation demand management (TDM) plan to mitigate private auto congestion through education and incentives such as monthly transit passes for tenants. Pittsburgh Complete Streets Policy and Climate Action Plan priorities should also apply.

Preservation of community character

History and authenticity of place should be preserved and celebrated.

Economic opportunity

Commercial development should support and grow small-scale independent retail and services in Lawrenceville, Polish Hill, Bloomfield, the Strip District, and other nearby communities. First-source hiring practices would benefit residents with new job opportunities. Resident-serving businesses are preferred, such as a grocery store as suggested by the ULI TAP report. Commercial development should also respect companies that make or craft things.

4.3 STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Herron Station Area is Experiencing Historic Development Activity

As of 2023, the Herron Station area was seeing historic levels of development activity. Areas that have historically been industrial and commercial, particularly in the Strip District, are being redeveloped to a mix of uses that includes moderate density multi-family residential projects. A handful of

known potential projects within the Herron Station area could add over 1,800 new units of housing that could be home to 3,600 new residents within the next few years. At a modest 15% to 20% mode share, these developments could be home to about 500 to 700 new transit riders within the Herron Station Area, taking advantage of both busway and on-street service within the area.

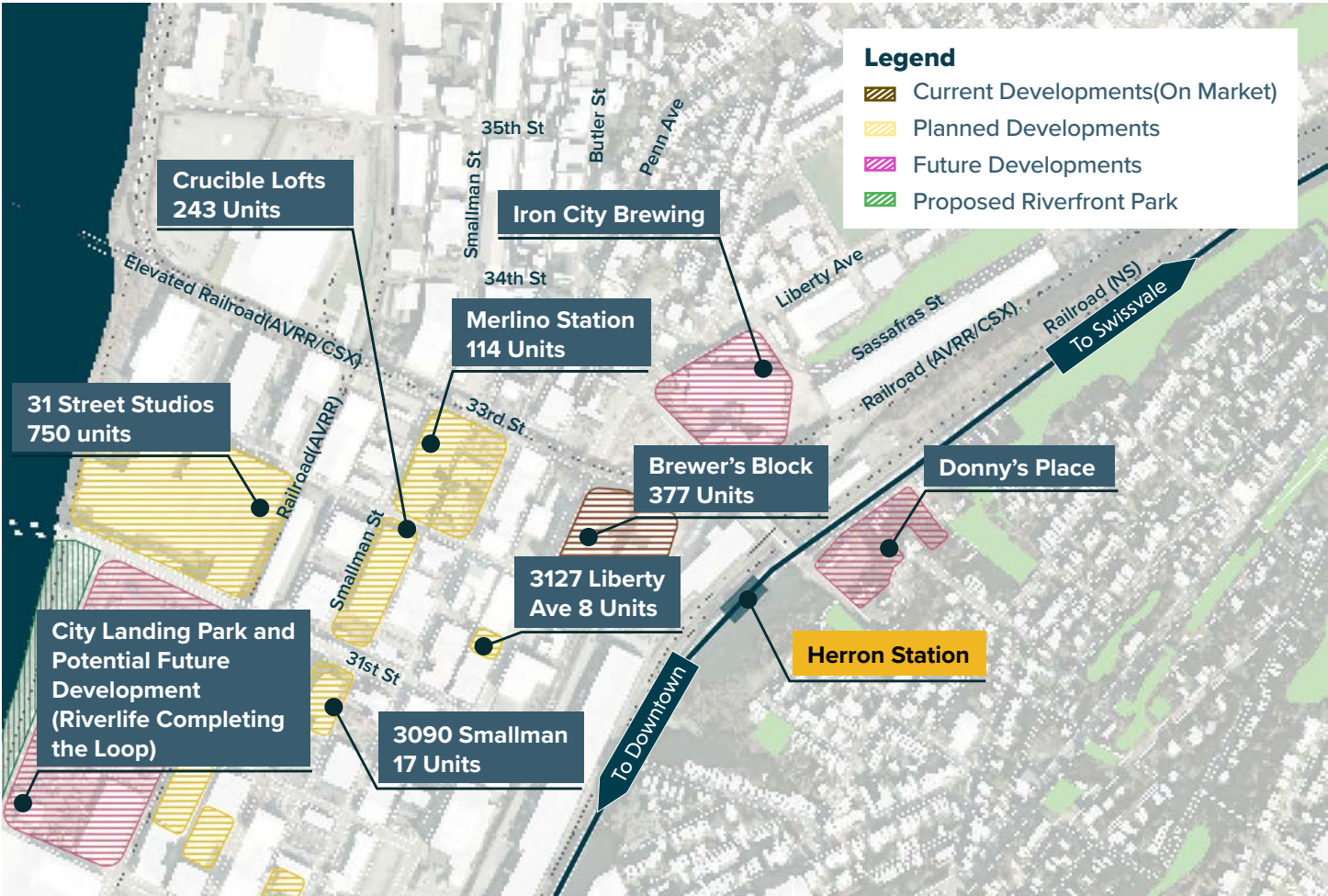


Fig.41 Known recent or planned housing developments in the Herron Station Area

Advocating for Equitable TOD (ETOD)

The quality of these developments will be determined by how well development orients itself toward transit and toward fostering car-free and car-lite living. As PRT describes in its TOD guidelines, developments that invest in making strong connections with their surroundings and public transit can reduce the level of investment necessary to support an automobile-dominant paradigm.

While PRT does not own developable land within the Herron Station Area, it can continue in its role as an advocate for TOD principles, including limiting the provision of off-street parking in new development and seeking increased density.

A lower ratio of parking spaces to a number of units or square footage can substantially lower development costs, allowing for greater density and affordability, supporting both PRT's and the community's goals.

Additionally, greater density throughout the station area can create greater vibrancy. More residents can support more small businesses, creating more activity that can encourage walkability and a sense of safety. More residents and more businesses also broaden the number of potential riders of public transit, while creating a more welcoming environment near Herron Station.

Ensuring that this development remains accessible to individuals who depend on transit the most is a key priority for PRT. PRT will continue to advocate for policies that encourage and/or require an increased level of affordable housing units in projects near its transit service.

Leveraging Development to Support Station Area Goals

With the strong opportunity for continued redevelopment within the Herron Station area, especially in the Strip District, there is an opportunity to leverage future tax increments to support PRT's station area goals. While market analysis was not included in the Herron Station Area Plan process, a Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) study would include general market analysis to estimate potential tax increment and recommend potential partial diversion of new tax revenue into a TRID fund. The TRID fund could be utilized to support both infrastructure projects within the station area and also subsidies to support affordable housing.

A TRID at Herron Station could be limited to areas within a 3/4-mile of Herron Station or could be expanded to include areas around other connected transit assets, such as a potential new Strip District busway station that could be built as part of PRT's Corridor G project from its NEXTransit long-range plan. A more expansive TRID that includes more developable sites can leverage more tax increments from more properties, thus allowing for more TRID-fund supported projects.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

5.1 IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

A new Herron Station presents the opportunity to:

- Support improved access to transit for everyone
- Create an inviting and inclusive environment that supports residents of all ages and abilities
- Improve on an already strong operational safety record at Herron Station
- Support community and ridership growth
- Integrate sustainability into the physical design of the station through reforestation strategies, solar energy, green stormwater infrastructure, and other treatments

Components of this plan will be implemented by PRT and other partners, particularly DOMI, as funding opportunities become available. Some elements of this plan have funding and a timeline while others yet do not. The graphic below provides a likely sequential timeline for station improvements.

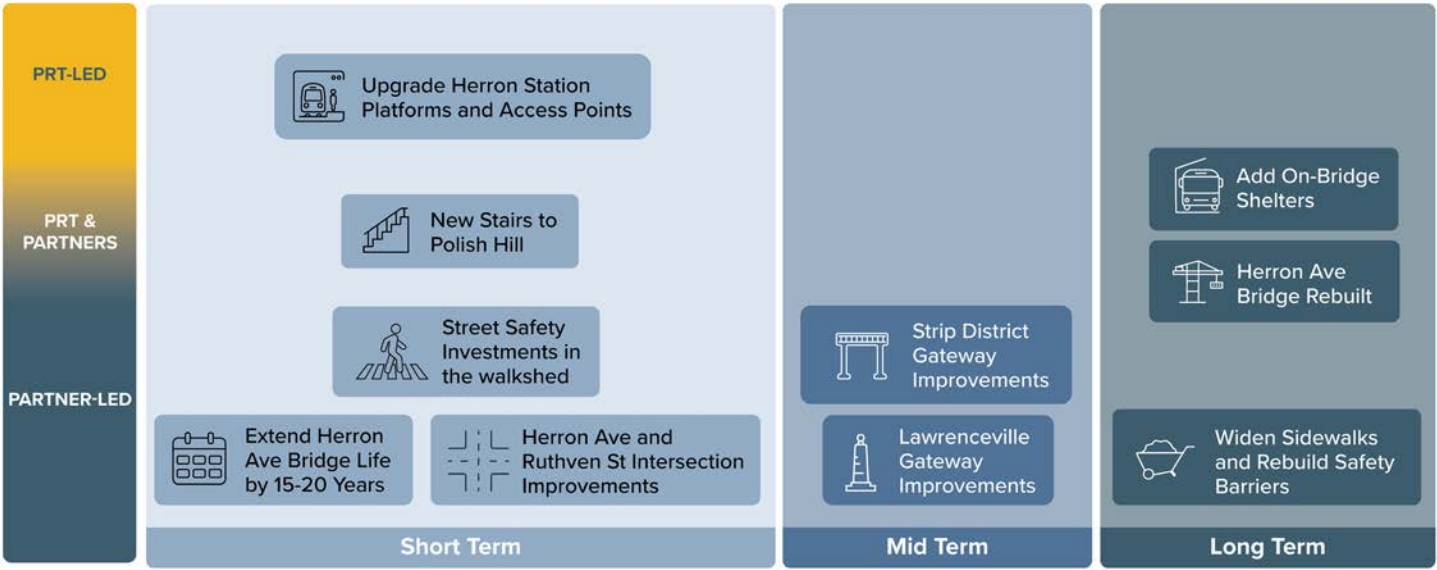


Fig.42 Short, middle, and long term phases of implementation

5.2 DESIGN GREAT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

As PRT updates existing facilities and constructs new ones, it can use its sponsorship of the physical design of transit stations and other infrastructure to embrace community goals in its facilities.

Three examples of these community partnerships through design could include:

- Incorporating public art into the fabric of new and existing East Busway stations, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s story, and potentially at Herron Station in particular, historical information about the Railroad Strike of 1877.
- Partner with the City of Pittsburgh and non-profits such as Tree Pittsburgh to undertake habitat restoration of the PRT owned hillside at Herron Station and the surrounding City of Pittsburgh greenway by removing invasive species and increasing native species plantings.

5.3 A BIG MOVE: ENVISION CERTIFICATION

A unique opportunity presented by a station redesign is the chance to design the station in accordance with the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's (ISI) Envision principles. According to ISI:



Envision Certification:

- Sets the standard for what constitutes sustainable, resilient, and equitable infrastructure.
- Incentivizes higher performance goals beyond minimum requirements.
- Gives recognition to projects that make significant contributions to sustainability, resiliency, and equity.
- Provides a common language for collaboration and clear communication, both internally with project teams and externally with the community at large.

5.3.1 ENVISION CERTIFICATION: WATER

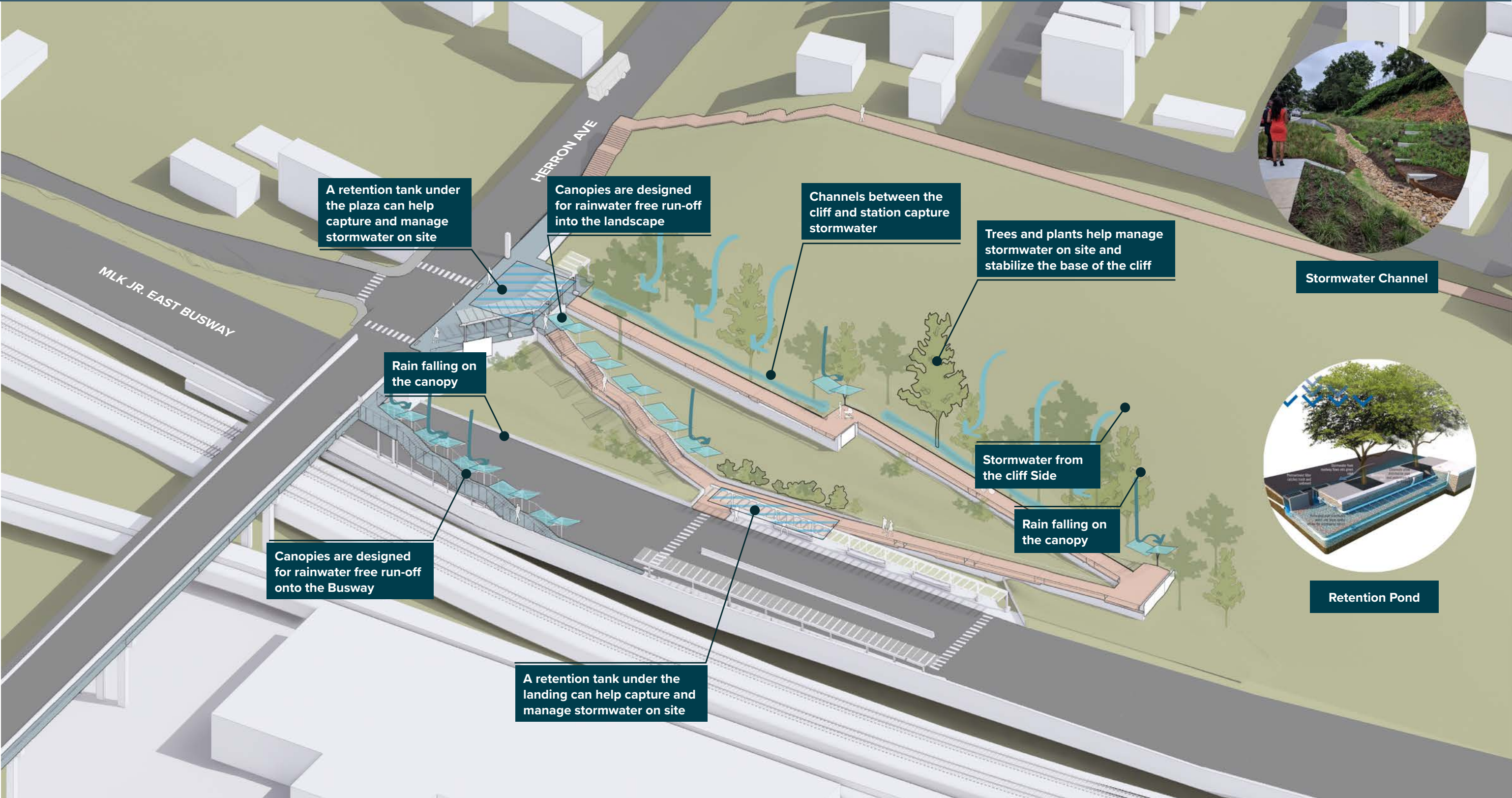


Fig.43 Site enhancements to manage water

5.3.2 ENVISION CERTIFICATION: SOLAR

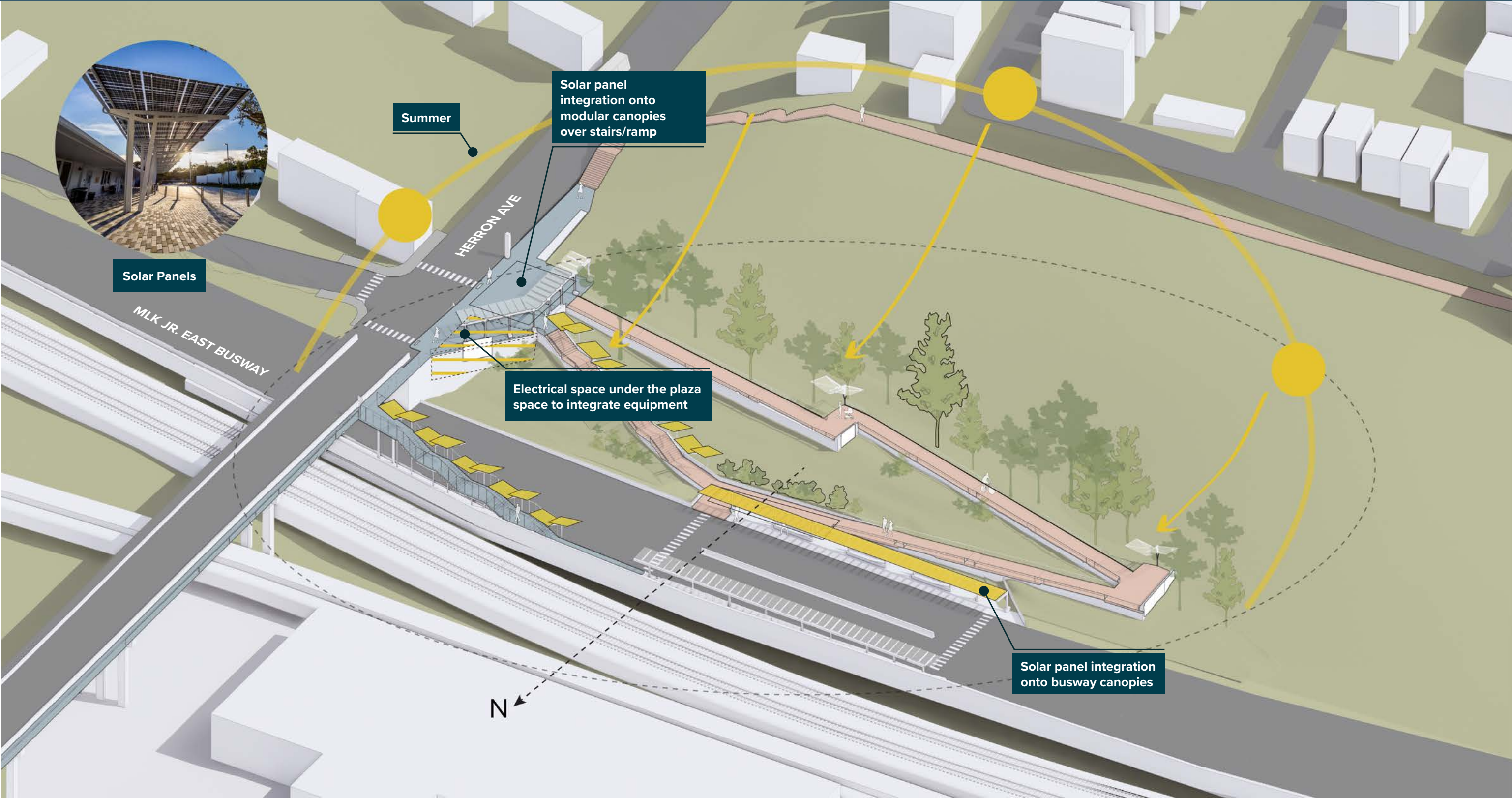


Fig.44 Opportunities for solar power generation

5.3.3 ENVISION CERTIFICATION: LANDSCAPE

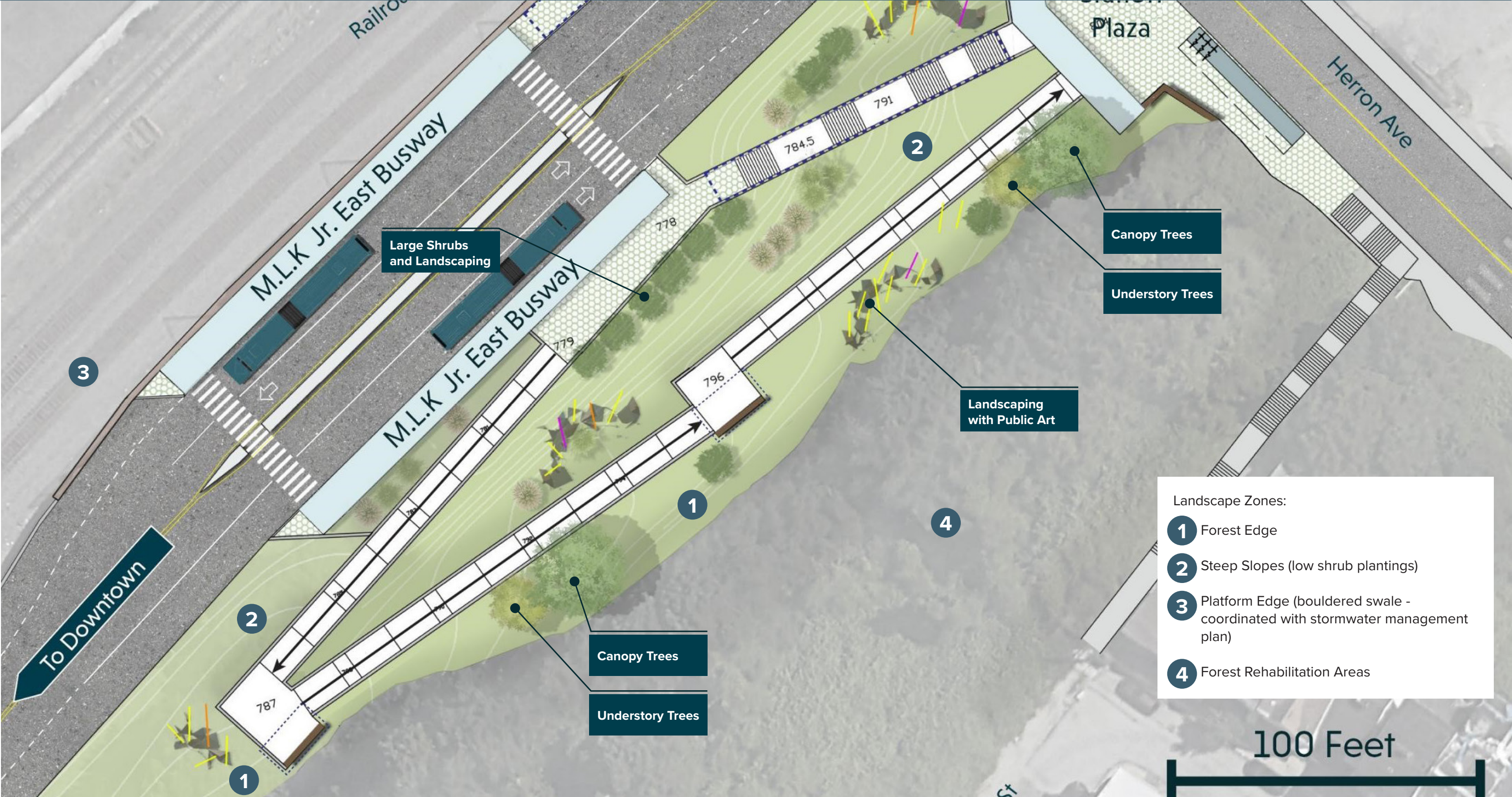


Fig.45 Sustainable landscaping strategy

5.3.4 ENVISION CERTIFICATION: LANDSCAPE PLANTING PALETTE



Fig.46 Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)



Fig.49 Sweet pepper bush (*Clethra alnifolia*)



Fig.48 Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)



Fig.50 Red twig dogwood (*Cornus sericeae*) - winter



Fig.47 Dwarf black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa* low scale mound or ground hug)



Fig.51 Winterberry (*Itea verticillata*) - winter

5.4 ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

PRT has an opportunity to create a more sustainable Herron Station by introducing low-maintenance native plants to ensure the long-term maintenance of the station design.

The hillside and cliff between the station and Polish Hill also represent an opportunity for ecological restoration.

Existing trees that are impacted by construction will require replacement on site or a fee in lieu of payment to comply with the City of Pittsburgh’s tree canopy ordinance. Some of these replacement trees could be planted in the hillside area as part of a broader ecological restoration project.

PRT is working to remove invasive species from its properties, and there may be an opportunity to partner with the City to develop a system-wide forestry management plan for PRT.

Geotechnical assessment of hillside stability should be among the first steps of the next design phase.



Fig.53 The steep slope above Herron Station is populated with non-native and invasive plant species.



Fig.54 Site map of steep slope areas appropriate for future ecological restoration

5.5 ENHANCE COMMUNITY SPACES CONNECTED BY TRANSIT

In its role as an advocate for transit-oriented communities, PRT can partner with community-based organizations and other public agencies to create more welcoming and inclusive public spaces to connect people to Herron Station and the adjacent neighborhoods of Polish Hill, Lawrenceville, and the Strip District. In Chapter 2, PRT describes some of the opportunities to create or enhance community spaces in the Herron Station Area. While PRT takes the lead on spaces on its own property such as the new street-level transit plaza at Herron Avenue, it takes on the role of advocate for community spaces elsewhere in the Herron Station Area.

For new projects, such as the steps connecting the Herron Avenue Bridge to 33rd Street or a pedestrian connection from Liberty Avenue to Penn Avenue, there is a straightforward process for advancing implementation with project sponsors and stakeholders. PRT's role can be to offer advocacy in support of the projects and to assist in convening partners through project development. Throughout implementation, PRT can add value by aligning project development with the principles of PRT's TOD Guidelines and station area plan.

Continued care and stewardship of new and existing community spaces presents a different kind of challenge than advancing specific project implementation. Continued care and stewardship

require continuous investment in monitoring and care of places that often do not have obvious jurisdiction or assignment of maintenance responsibility. In the case of PRT's own property, PRT has its own resources for maintaining station assets and community spaces to a standard level of care. In some places, such as at East Liberty Station, PRT may partner with a community or development partner to maintain aspects of station assets and community to a higher level of care. In the case of East Liberty Station, funds from the East Liberty TRID are used to support private maintenance of landscaping around the station. At Herron Station, though PRT does not own property that is appropriate for redevelopment, a similar TRID could support enhanced care of aspects of Herron Station.



Fig.55 A new transit plaza at Herron Avenue and Ruthven Street improves the quality of the rider experience for people traveling through Herron Station

For community spaces that are not on PRT's property, continued care and stewardship are more challenging for PRT to ensure. In this case, PRT is a stakeholder who can work with community-based organizations, development partners, and city agencies to create an accountable framework with clear delegation of responsibilities to ensure that community spaces connected to transit are well cared for. This station area plan identifies where spaces are that are important for connectivity to Herron Station and, as part of implementing the broader vision for the station area, PRT should continue its dialogue with stakeholders about stewardship of these spaces.

One potential community space that PRT owns but is not a part of Herron Station is its property along the northern edge of Downing Street in Polish Hill. This is a location where stewardship responsibility is

not necessarily obvious. Presently, there is a fence along the edge of the property with informal but well-used parking between Downing Street and the fence. There is evidence of community members accessing PRT-owned property into grassy area on the inside of the fence and using the space for passive recreation and small informal gatherings. In alignment with the City of Pittsburgh's Greenways program, PRT could begin conversations with a community-based organization to evaluate creating a community-stewarded public community space at this location. This could be a community asset where PRT retains ownership of the property or could include conveying ownership to the City of Pittsburgh for future expansion of the Bigelow Greenway. This would create a framework where community-based volunteers would be able to care for public spaces within their own neighborhood.



Fig.56 PRT-owned land along the north edge of Downing Street in Polish Hill, at the top of the hill above Herron Station

5.6 WAYFINDING IMPROVEMENTS

Public input received throughout this project indicates that there are a substantial number of residents who are either not aware that the station exists, or who do not know how to get to the station from their neighborhood. An improved wayfinding program can help raise awareness of the station and support ridership growth.

This plan recommends installing wayfinding signs throughout adjacent neighborhoods at the edge of the 10-minute walkshed for Herron Station.

These locations could include:

- 1. Herron Station
- 2. Downing Street stairs
- 3. Doughboy Square
- 4. Liberty Avenue and 37th Street
- 5. Smallman Street and 32nd Street
- 6. Herron Avenue and Liberty Avenue
- 7. Brewers Block
- 8. Harding Way stairs
- 9. Brereton Street and Dobson Street
- 10. Bigelow Boulevard and Herron Avenue

Individual signs within neighborhoods would include the Pedestrian Directional and Primary Gateway signs from the PRT Signage palette.

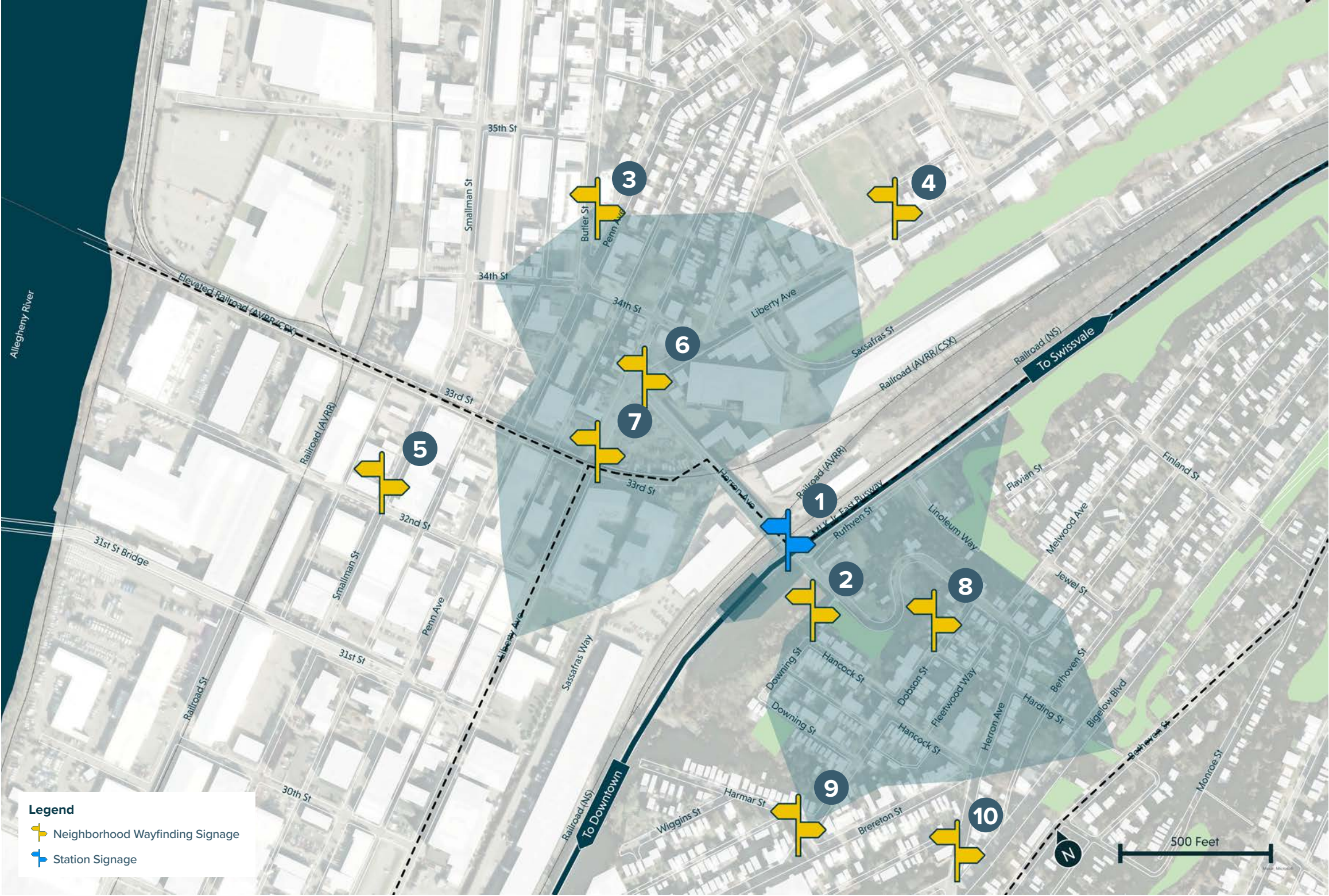
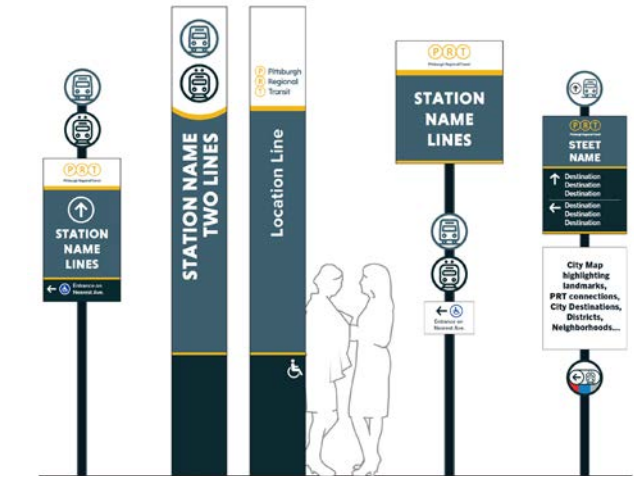


Fig.57 Map of station area wayfinding



5.7 EQUITABLE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (ETOD) STRATEGIES

PRT is committed to encouraging equitable transit-oriented development in its station areas. With substantial development pressure in the Herron Station area, PRT anticipates that the nature of this station area will change over the next decade. PRT has fostered dialogue about development near Herron Station and worked with its steering committee members to develop the community development priorities described in Chapter 4.2 in the categories listed below. While PRT does not own land developable in this station area, it will continue to engage partners to ensure the recommendations to promote ETOD in this report are implemented. These include rezoning parts of the station area to allow for higher density, considering a Transit Investment Revitalization District (TRID) study, and ensuring community ownership over the development process.

- Community Ownership
- Applying TOD Principles
- Affordability
- Multi-Generational Housing
- Mobility/Connectivity
- Environmental Health and Sustainability
- Public Space
- Preservation of Community Character
- Economic Opportunity

Rezone to Promote TOD Outcomes

The update to the City’s Housing Needs Assessment (2022) identified that changes are needed to increase the production of multi-family housing around busway and light rail stations.

The recommendations of that assessment include:

- Rezone the area along Ruthven Street and Herron Avenue to R-MU so that multi-family development is possible directly across the street from the station.
- Rezone the area between 34th to 36th Streets along Charlotte and Smallman Streets from UI to RIV-IMU to allow for the use of the Performance Points system to encourage construction of more residential buildings.

The current zoning for Herron Station is shown on the next page.

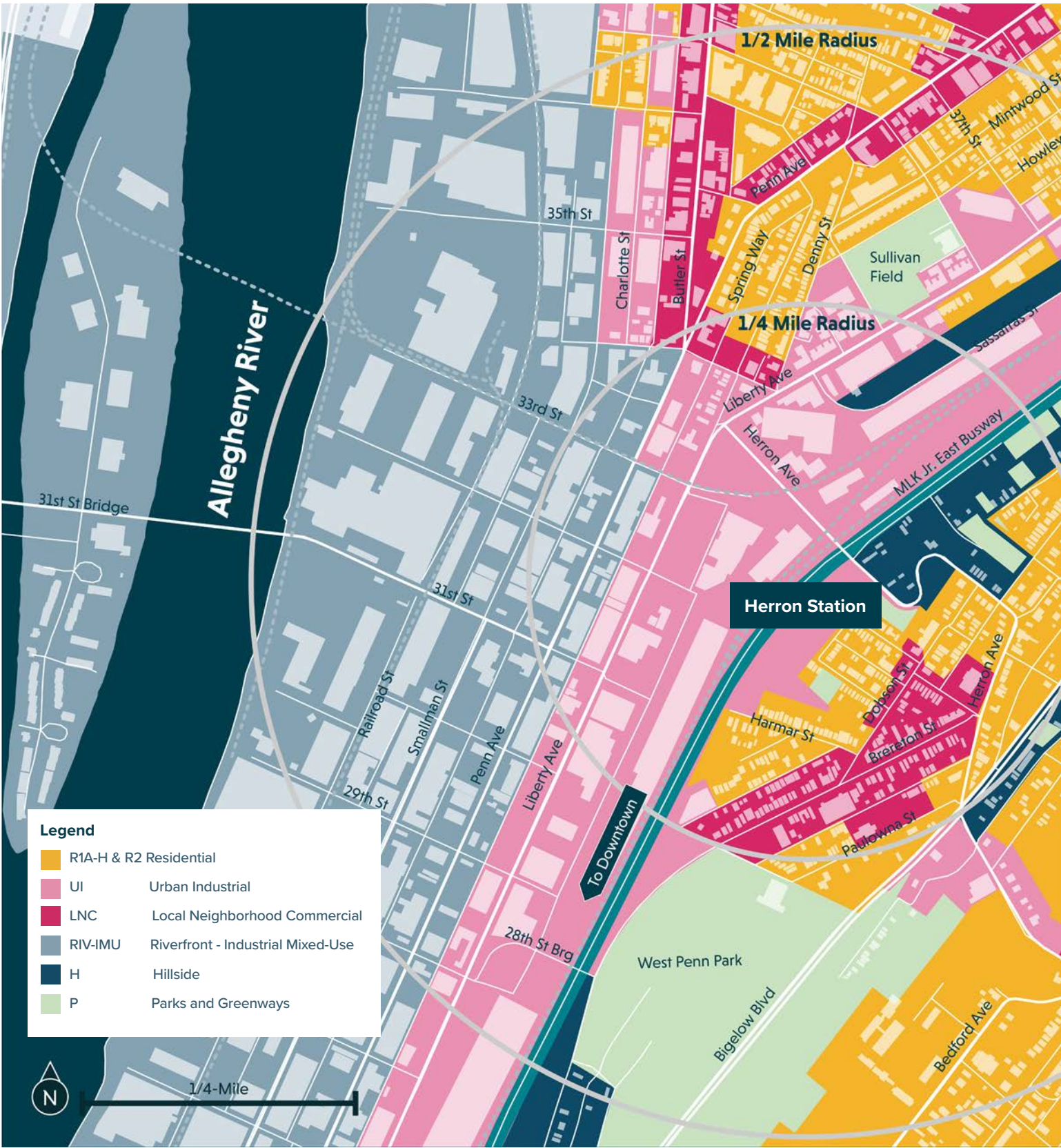


Fig.58 Current Zoning Near Herron Station

5.7.1 Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) Implementation

Consider a TRID

A TRID is a regulatory and financial tool that allows neighborhoods that receive transit investment to capture the tax revenue increase of properties around transit enhancements, and reinvest those funds into the neighborhoods. A TRID has been implemented in East Liberty and additional TRID studies have been completed in Homewood, Uptown, Manchester, Beechview, and neighborhoods around South Hills Junction.

The diagram below shows how property tax increment from transit-oriented development can be partially diverted into a TRID fund to support projects that create station areas that are attractive to transit-oriented development. Following a TRID study to estimate future tax increment revenue, TRID projects can be implemented with bonds in advance of development taking place. After 20 years, the TRID would expire and the full tax increment would accrue

to the traditional taxing bodies. The relative scale of the boxes in the diagram is based on 2023 millage rates and the capital and operating budgets for the three taxing bodies at Herron Station for illustrative purposes.

Cost estimates from this plan and other infrastructure planning efforts can be used to inform a TRID planning process and a potential program of projects that a TRID could support financially.

The Urban Development Authority (URA), Department of City Planning, and PRT will continue to work with developers in the area to identify interest in a Herron Station Area TRID. To move forward with a TRID, developer funding and commitment will need to be secured.

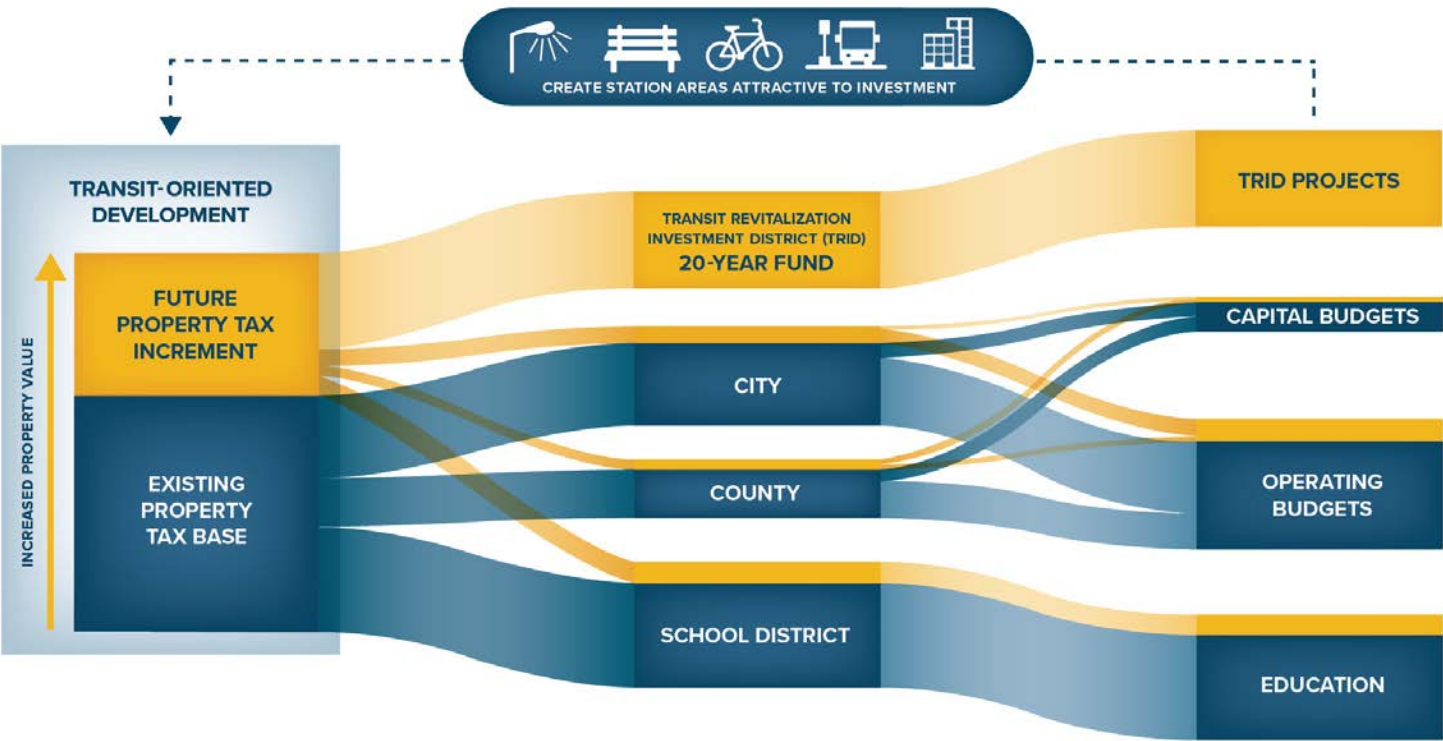


Fig.59 Diagram showing how TRID can enable transit-supportive projects in station areas

5.7.2 Affordability and Community

Establish Affordable Housing Targets at Corridor and Station Area Levels and Match With Funding

As PRT supports community efforts to deliver ETOD near Herron Station, it will be helpful to set affordable housing target goals for both the overall MLK, Jr. East Busway corridor, as well as within specific station areas, including Herron Station.

Goal targets can be expressed both in raw numbers of new affordable homes, and as a percentage of all new homes that are affordable to residents at different levels below the Area Median Income (AMI).

PRT and City DCP may all play a role in helping to establish these targets, and to identify funding streams to support the delivery of an affordable housing pipeline in the corridor and station area.

Promote Affordable Ground Floor Space For Local/Minority, Women Business Enterprises (MWBE) Businesses + Community Space

Developers can support legacy and local/MWBE businesses by offering affordable and favorable lease terms to these businesses in ground-floor spaces of commercial and mixed-use development. Developers can identify anchor tenants who can pay market rents, which helps subsidize affordable commercial space or community-supporting space in a portion of the building. Developers could be incentivized in different ways: a grant-based program, a deed restriction for publicly-owned land, or a master lease for ground-floor space that enables flexible ground floor lease models.

Community Ownership Over Development Process

Establish a consistent process across all neighborhoods with opportunities for community input/feedback throughout, managed in a way that is consistent with existing community processes (i.e. ground rules, communication protocols, etc.), and with decision points driven by the community. New development takes into account the effects of construction and works to mitigate negative impacts on adjacent communities.

5.7.3 Herron Station Plan ETOD Action Steps Summary Table

Strategy	Leader	Description	Development Priority
Rezone to promote TOD outcomes	City DCP	Encourage an equitable mix of transit-supportive uses in station areas to service people from diverse income-groups. Design places that are not car-dependent. Discourage large, auto-oriented uses in these areas. This can include affordability requirements or incentives.	TOD Principles, Affordability, Mobility/Connectivity, Public Space
Establish Affordable Housing Targets at Corridor, Station Area Levels and Match with Funding	PRT, City DCP	Set station area targets of units to be affordable, with a priority for long-term affordability and for very-low and low-income and/or transit-dependent populations. In addition to percentage goals per project, allow developers to demonstrate progress towards total area targets through increased density.	Affordability
Affordable Ground Floor Space for Local/MWBE Businesses + Community Space	Developers, City, URA	Developers can support legacy and local/MWBE businesses by offering affordable and favorable lease terms to these businesses in ground-floor spaces of commercial and mixed-use development. Developers can identify anchor tenants who can pay market rents, which helps subsidize affordable commercial space or community-supporting space in a portion of the building. Developers could be incentivized in different ways: a grant-based program, a deed restriction for publicly-owned land, or a master lease for ground-floor space that enables flexible ground floor lease models.	Affordability, Economic Opportunity
Consider TRID Study	City DCP, URA	Taxes attributable to new improvements are set-aside in a fund to finance public improvements or community benefits within the boundaries of a defined zone. TRID is traditionally associated with infrastructure funding but can also be used for community benefits like affordable housing. Requires developer commitment and investment in the study.	All
Community Ownership Over Development Process	Community groups	Establish a consistent process across all neighborhoods with opportunities for community input/feedback throughout, managed in a way that's consistent with existing community processes (i.e. ground rules, communication protocols, etc.), and with decision points driven by the community. New development takes into account the effect of construction and works to mitigate negative impacts on adjacent communities.	Community Ownership

5.8 DEPARTMENT OF MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE (DOMI) PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout the development of this plan, PRT and DOMI have coordinated frequently on a variety of design elements for Herron Station. DOMI will lead the rebuilding of the Downing Street stairs, and will be a key partner for PRT in improving pedestrian conditions on the Herron Avenue Bridge, and realizing stronger connections to the community through the Lawrenceville and Strip District gateways.

Currently, DOMI is developing the Liberty Avenue Safety Improvement Project which will improve safety for people walking, biking, driving and taking public transit along Liberty Avenue in the Strip District between 11th Street and Herron Avenue. Additionally, DOMI is developing a Herron Avenue Bridge state of good repair project which will make improvements to the condition of the viaduct.

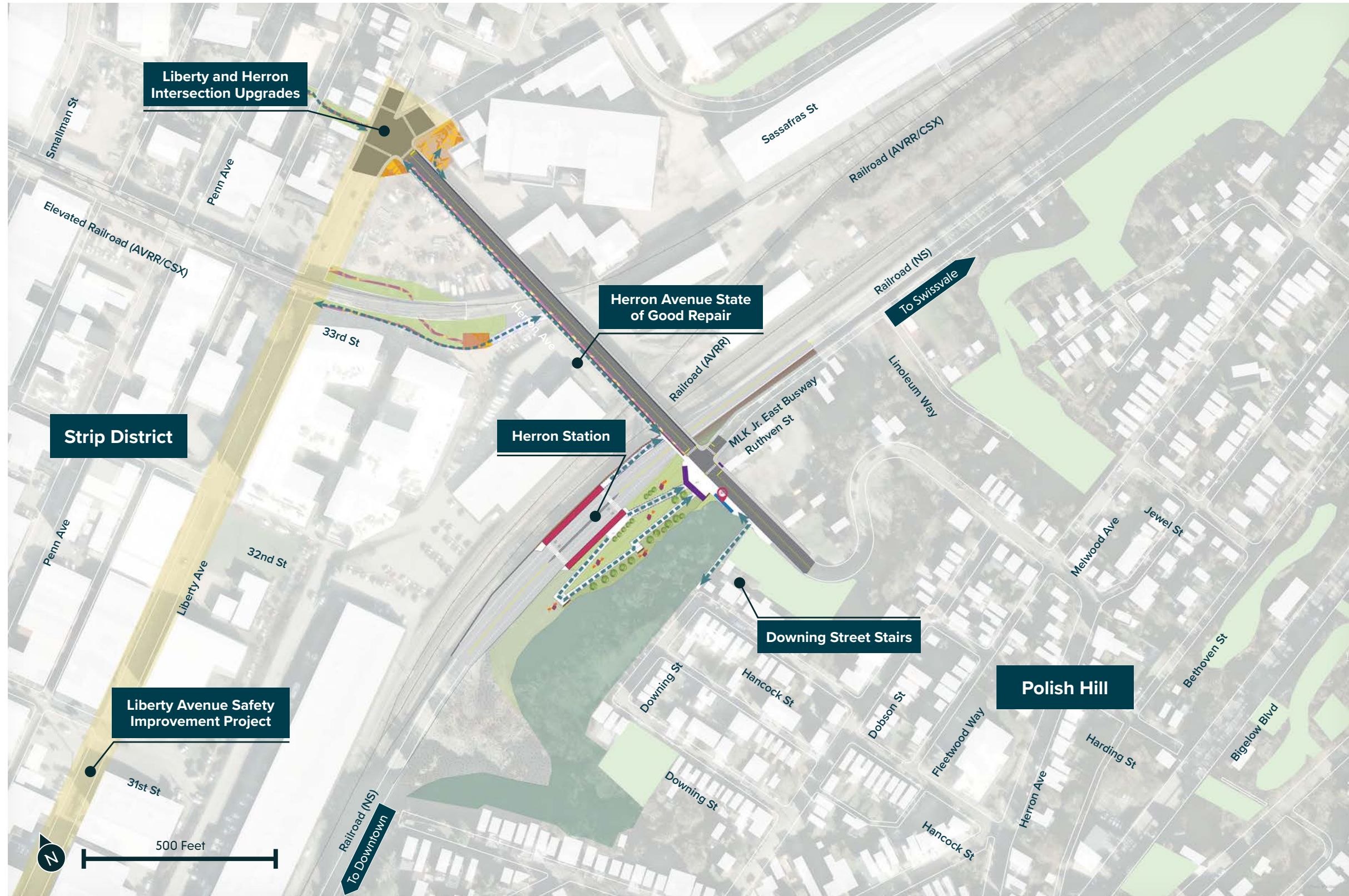


Fig.60 Currently planned DOMI projects shown with PRT's Station Area Gateway Improvements



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